# THE TRAGEDY OF EDWARD VII

BY W. H. EDWARDS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK

DODD, MEAD & COMPANY

MCMXXVIII

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# THE TRAGEDY OF EDWARD VII

GOD SAVE THE KING!

MR. PUNCH. "Your Coronation awaits your Majesty's pleasure, but you are already crowned in the hearts of your people."

From *Punch*, February 6, 1901

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# PREFACE

The fresh material now available regarding Edward VII, politically the most gifted member of the English royal house and perhaps the greatest of all constitutional kings, makes it possible to see through the conventional picture, impressed on the public mind through the many photographs of the eventful external life of the monarch, and to portray him as a human personality.

No rational interpretation of European history during the first two decades of the twentieth century is possible without a dispassionate and unprejudiced appraisement of Edward VII. Material from the British and German archives; the biography of the King by Sir Sidney Lee—a triumph of the art of compilation, but too voluminous and too reserved in its judgments; and Raymond's *Collection of British Portraits,* form the basis for this psychological and historical analysis of that great politician who was England's King. The same material also provides most valuable sidelights on the great moral and human struggles which were waged about this royal figure. The present volume makes no pretence to chronicle the life story of King Edward; for that a vast mass of material would be necessary. It is merely an attempt to sketch a man and a politician whose royal birth was the greatest obstacle to his development.

The child without a youth; the adolescent deprived of the smallest measure of personal freedom; the adult seeking in vain for a field of activity; and the political genius who had not been permitted to express himself creatively until his physical powers were well-nigh exhausted—these furnish all the elements of tragedy in the life of a man richly endowed with personal merits. Fate and duty had condemned him to

live in a world of shadows—the shadow of traditional authority, demanding to be respected; the shadow of other human figures great and small; and finally, just as the sun was preparing to shed its evening glow on his declining years, the shadow of lurking death. In this realm of shadows, which only a revolutionary could have pierced, was passed the life of the King who most powerfully affected the fate of Europe.

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# BOOK I

# PRINCELY EDUCATION

CHAPTER I

# THE SHADOW OF THE ANCESTORS

ON a beautiful July day in 1846, a brilliant throng was gathered in the rooms of Buckingham Palace. All the high dignitaries of the realm were present to celebrate the baptism of Helena, the third daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Among them was Macaulay, whose ability as a historian was enriched by the gift of vision. As the five-year-old Prince Edward, a fair, frail boy, was carefully led in by his stately father, Macaulay remarked, "Pretty but delicate," and added: "If that boy knew his destiny!"

Whilst the child was still in his cradle it had been evident to the mind of a more commonplace, though temporarily more famous man than Macaulay, that the eldest son and the second child of Queen Victoria of England and of Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, was a child marked by Fate. The wife of William Ewart Gladstone, the hero of the middle-class Liberals, who was related to Lady Lyttelton, governess to the royal children, after a visit paid to the cradle of the royal baby, wrote in her diary the following sentence, which doubtless originated in the mind of her rhetorically disposed husband: "Who could look at him and think of his destiny without mixed emotions?"

Macaulay and Gladstone, with their strong historical and political bent of mind, were not merely considering in these Delphic reflections the burdens that would fall upon a royal child who was heir to the throne; as convinced monarchists they naturally thought more of the menacing shades of his ancestors. They considered his great-grandfather, the wilful George III, whose physical and mental degeneration ended in imbecility; his great-uncle, George IV, the wildest rake in

Europe; William IV, whose obstinacy during the fight for Parliamentary Reform in 1832 almost shattered the Constitution and caused the downfall of the monarchy. And then there was that drill-sergeant of a grandfather, the Duke of Kent. His learned German father, so unpopular in England, and the young Queen, who in her youth had been considered by the puritanical commoners as fast and frivolous, constituted no great guarantee that the dangerous inheritance from the child's Hanoverian ancestors would be obliterated or rendered innocuous; whilst, in the realm of the living, the bearer of the Hanoverian crown and his blind son served as terrible warnings.

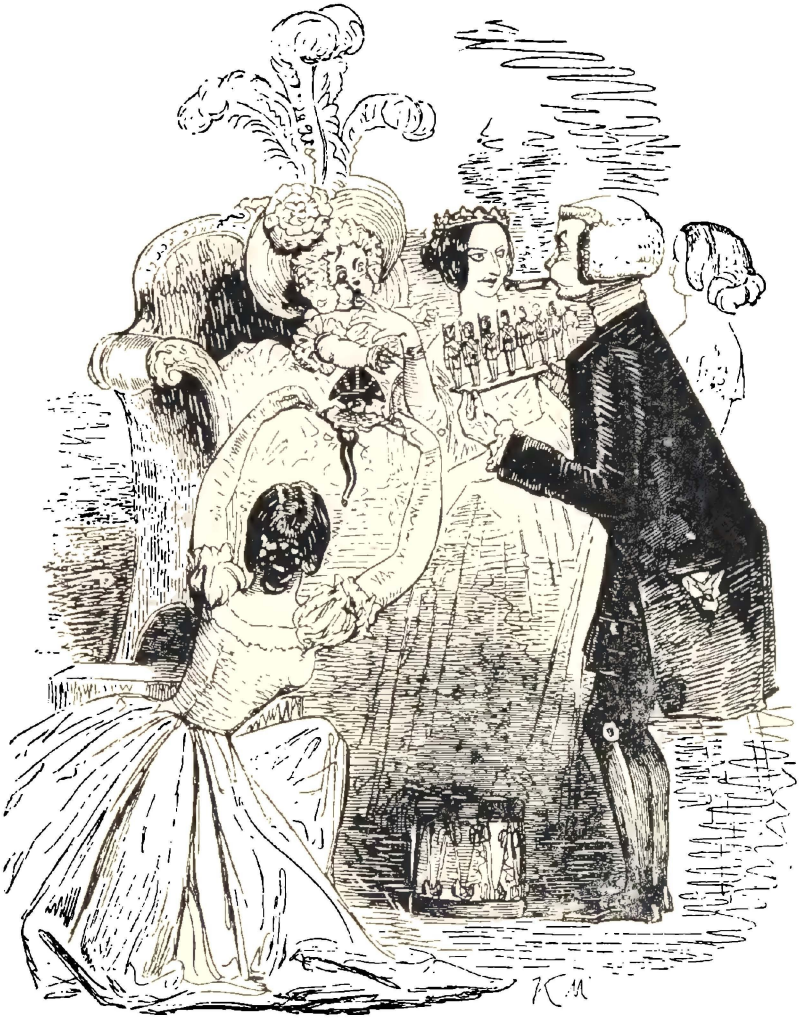
Indeed, after the birth of the first prince there crept into the royal house a sense of terror at the thought of what qualities he might have inherited. The learned German father, Prince Albert, whose tender conscience and sense of duty made of him a martyr, never rejoiced in the possession of the beautiful sunny child who was his son. Whilst the Queen was still in childbed, the gloomy Baron Stockmar, that strange admixture of rationalism and puritanism, who had been tutor to Prince Albert, was set to work out a thesis wherein he enumerated for the young Queen's benefit the hereditary tendencies which must be checked in the upbringing of the Prince. A strong feeling of abhorrence at the idea of what evils the child might suffer through ancestral influences was the cause of the Queen's ready acceptance of every inhuman rule which Prince Albert and Baron Stockmar enforced in his upbringing. And the Queen's yielding on these points can easily be understood. She was eleven years old when George IV died, and she was but eighteen when William IV left her the throne. There were still men about her who remembered the peril in which the realm had stood as a result of the weakness of character and unworthiness of the last three bearers of the English crown.

Before the birth of Prince Edward the royal house had consisted only of Queen Victoria and her eldest child, who later became Kaiserin Frederick. But with the birth of a prince, the thought of the last of the Hanoverian kings and the lives they had led was quite sufficient to sadden the Queen as she contemplated the family's mental and spiritual heritage. Her mother, the Duchess of Kent, never shrank from allowing the young Princess Victoria, whilst still in her early teens, to know all about her private affairs. The memory of these things roused to an all but unbalanced degree the young mother's fears for her son's potential hereditary failings, which, according to the father's researches, were almost legion. Lady Lyttelton, the children's governess, aggravated this complex by referring to the many princes who had lost their thrones between 1830 and March 1848. In the spring of 1848, when the Cabinet suggested, for the quite improbable reason that there might be a rising in London, that the royal children should be sent to Osborne, and when Prince William of Prussia (later the first German Kaiser) came as a refugee to England, Lady Lyttelton began to wonder whether the young Prince would still be a prince ten years later, and whether there would then be any prince alive in the world! A gloomy outlook, indeed! And it found pathetic expression in a letter from the young Queen to her democratic uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians: "When one thinks of one's children, their education, their future—and prays for them—I always think and say to myself: 'Let them grow up fit for *whatever station* they may be placed in—*high or low!*—this I never thought of before, but I do always now.'" (11th July 1848.)

In this atmosphere of pessimism, in this tension of vague and chaotic fears which threatened to develop into a tragedy through the idea of inherited faults, the only suggestion which the stronger intellect of the father could offer to the subtler

intuitions of the mother was the renunciation of all pleasure in life, greater severity in the treatment of herself and her children, and the sacrifice of every human quality on the altar of duty. The only one who succeeded in keeping both feet on the solid ground of common sense was the old Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. He warned the royal parents against naming the heir to the throne after Prince Albert, who was not popular with the masses of the people. Better, he said, the English name Edward, which, calling to mind the first and third great bearers of the name, would endear the young Prince to his subjects. With his usual good sense the old gentleman wisely conceded to the mother that it was well worth the Prince's while to strive after the moral qualities of his father—the man of whom his contemporaries said that he had not the courage to sin. To comfort her he added, in opposition to Prince Albert and Stockmar, that the race on both sides gave the Prince a good chance of satisfactory development. He further crowned his healthy optimism with the following piece of excellent advice to the Queen: "Be not over solicitous about education. It may be able to do much, but it does not do so much as is expected of it. It may mould and direct character, but it rarely alters it."

During his early years, when he remained in the nursery with Lady Lyttelton, surrounded by sisters and brothers who were almost of his own age, the life of the little Prince was comparatively normal. Certainly Baron Stockmar applied himself to chronicling, with scientific exactitude, the progress of this new shoot on the royal branch. He registered each tendency and habit of the child with the fair curls and merry blue eyes. The teaching even in the nursery was bilingual, German and English. Great importance was attached to handwriting, devotion to the family, excessive politeness and truthfulness. In Lee's Biography there is a touching



THE FIRST TOOTH

From *Punch,* February 11, 1843

picture of the little Prince taking a stroll in the royal park with the famous geologist Lyell. The six-year-old boy told his learned companion of a magic trick a conjurer had shown him and his sisters and brothers at a children's party at the Palace, and then added sadly: "Papa knows how all these things are done." Sad indeed is the life of a child when "Entrance forbidden" is written before the world of wonders.

The most tragic interference with the development of the Prince took place when he was seven years old, in that year of fate for Europe, 1848, a period which made such a deep impression on his mother and on his motherly governess, Lady Lyttelton. Prince Albert and Stockmar decided to rule out every gentle and feminine influence which might affect the child's personality. The Prince was therefore withdrawn from the care of Lady Lyttelton, and handed over to a tutor who was to follow exclusively the father's instructions with regard to the education of his charge. As the directing of the future of the child, who was not only her first-born son, but also the successor to *her* throne, was by every human and royal right the mother's, they formulated with her consent an "educational discipline" for the little Prince. This shocking document, the product of minds which had a fanatical reverence for the idea of duty, provided that the same system should be followed continuously through the tender years of boyhood right on until he reached manhood's estate.

The first premise of the system was that nothing must be left to "chance," here meaning to "nature." The tutor, carefully selected to conform to Stockmar's conception of virtue, was to exercise an unceasing supervision of the Prince's activities, in order to suppress all "undesirable tendencies of adolescence." The pupil must be debarred from all association with companions of his own age. Mental concentration must be achieved by uninterrupted study of literature, natural science, archæology, and art. Sport and amuse-

ments, though "only of a sober kind," were permitted, but they were to be strictly rationed and everlastingly supervised. The pupil must be sternly denied any kind of liberty.

Such was the solitary confinement to which the emotionally impressionable Prince, with his very active temperament, was to be condemned, as if he were some trained animal penned in a cramping cage in a travelling circus. And such were the methods adopted by the German father and the German mentor in their efforts to prevent the development of undesirable hereditary tendencies. "King Edward," asserts his friend and biographer, "looked back with pain on his educational ordeal." Lee takes care to emphasize the fact that the child's love for his father was not crushed by this system of education; but it was always "mingled with fear and with an awe-inspiring faith in paternal omnipotence and omniscience."

When a biographer is also a courtier he must naturally observe a certain reserve with regard to the results of such methods. The impartial historian, on the other hand, whilst admitting that Prince Albert's system may be justified in the training of masses of men into military, clerical, and administrative types, and that such principles may turn an average man into a submissive soldier, an obedient official, or a useful member of the *Ecclesia Militans,* must point out that, in the upbringing of Prince Edward, it was about as suitable and as justifiable as the methods of the Prussian soldier-king, Frederick William I, in whose cradle, by a freak of fortune, had been laid the genius of Sans Souci.

Psychologists and historians have for long been puzzled as to how the delicate, handsome, and beauty-loving Prussian prince could—in the shadow of Katte's grave, haunted by the vision of the execution of his friend before his very eyes —grow up into a man of abundant charm, with a fiery ardour, alert and unfailing in the most critical struggles for

existence, instead of into a neurotic, subject to mental crises and soul-sickness. The relationship between "Old Fritz" and his father, the two wearers of the Prussian crown, who had no sense of common human values, ended in fear and estrangement. This has its exact parallel in English history. Harshness almost inhuman towards his own offspring, where his peculiar sense of duty seemed to demand it, the denial of all personal worth in the boy, and the elimination of every humanizing influence, are equally and obviously characteristic of the ideas of "disciplinary upbringing" of both Frederick William and Prince Albert. During the youth of Prince Edward there was no Katte who could be court-martialled because he was an unsuitable friend. In that epoch, one of intellectual but not psychological enlightenment, there was substituted an order forbidding all association with companions of the same age. In its thoroughness this rationalism was more cruel than was the zealous court martial held at Küstrin. Before he was seven years old Prince Edward had been robbed of his youth by Stockmar and Prince Albert, acting on a mother's morbid fear.

To find the reason why these greatest political geniuses of their times, Frederick and Edward, who astounded all their contemporaries by their sound judgment and perfect nervous control, did not emerge from their educational penitentiaries as mental wrecks, we must consider the family history of their mothers.

When Stockmar set down his "disciplinary upbringing" for the heir to the English throne, he based it upon his knowledge of the child's ancestors. The characteristics of the child's two great-uncles, George IV and William IV, were especially considered in order to deduce that sum of qualities which must be eliminated through the proposed educational régime. Experts on heredity have for centuries quarrelled over the question as to what qualities a lineage,

a race, or a species is liable to inherit; but a certain amount of agreement has been reached on one point—that an active inherited trait can be handed down only through the direct line. But neither of the bogeys of the Prince's parents was the child's direct ancestor. The direct forebears on the mother's side were the First, Second, and Third Georges, and the Duke of Kent, who was George III's son and Queen Victoria's father. The only definitely dark point here is the fact that George III, at a very great age, died blind, paralysed, and imbecile. But even if one considers that his condition was due to inherited and not to acquired tendencies—with which the present writer does not agree—no course of education could have prevented its appearances. Failing sight, feeble-mindedness and paralysis are physical and not psychical signs of degeneration. Recent researches have already proved that only to a very small degree can the origins of the sad state in which George III spent the eve of his life be referred back to his progenitors. There is only one thing, failing eyesight, that points to the physical degeneration of the House of Guelph. But this failing was handed down from George III in a line that ran through the Hanoverian branch of his family. The Crown Prince George of Hanover, who was of the same age as Queen Victoria, was blind from his youth. George II's feeble-mindedness and paralysis appeared only at a comparatively advanced age, and may have been due to his not being completely cured of an illness contracted in middle age. The personality and activity of George III seem rather to lead to the conclusion that as a father he was a thoroughly healthy man. The King showed, at any rate in the critical phases of his reign, that he was uncommonly powerful and obstinate in pursuing his aims, and this points to anything but feeble-mindedness and mental disorder. To our modern ideas of a constitutional monarch, this king, who believed in his own omniscience, naturally appears

a rather unique character. But if we waive his conception of constitutional law, and, by examining his now published letters, seek his political aims, we find that they yield a logically complete imperial system, which from the point of view of the development of British world-power appears quite as sensible as, and at any rate more complete than, the opportunist policy of most of his Ministers.

Thus the moral heritage from this great-grandfather was insignificant in its transmission of tendencies, and was already strongly rooted in another branch of the House, the Hanoverian. Lord Melbourne was therefore right in his assertion that the Prince "on both sides," from the father as well as from the mother, had every chance to develop desirable qualities. In the father's branch, the House of Coburg, besides the outward characteristics, which were especially discernible in the features of King Edward and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, there was a psycho-mental inheritance, a complex of qualities which may be designated as worldly wisdom, knowledge of men, and a sense of reality. Practically all the Coburgs were what is commonly called crafty. Their will-power was normally developed, but it was seldom risked in a challenge to another person's will-power; it preferred rather to reveal itself in the form of an ably pursued and tenacious adherence to a clearly recognized aim. On the father's side the chief and, indeed, overwhelmingly positive inheritance of the Prince consisted of an instinctively sure direction of judgment—a quality with which an individual may be born, but which he can never acquire. In Edward we find a mass of positive qualities inherited from the father's side, which could scarcely be influenced by education. From the mother's side we find the possibility of a negative physical quality, namely, weak sight, which education could neither make better nor worse. Fortunately, the weakness never extended.

As the education of the Prince aimed at the production of a passionless paragon, practically without a will of his own, who, as Stockmar expressed it, was supposed to make obedience to his parents the only substance of his life, there must, as in the case of "Old Fritz," have been some very strong inherited quality that successfully prevented the system of education from destroying the boy's personality. The sad fate of the little English Prince was that his one-sided education should have been constructed only on a negative valuation of the doctrine of inheritance, the study of which at that time was yet in its infancy. When we correctly apply the theory of heredity, however, it is equally impossible to neglect the positive inheritance of the Prince.

Forced by parents, whom they did not love and who lacked understanding, into an educational strait-jacket which can only be described as designed to kill all personality, Edward VII and Frederick II of Prussia were, as their contemporaries testify, physically delicate boys, by temperament generous and easily excited. Both were intelligent and both matured early, though in entirely different ways. Both were from their earliest youth definite personalities, endowed with the strongest urge towards an active life, glowing with a desire to be positively tested. On what rock, then, did the experiment of Frederick William I and Prince Albert founder? Both the royal children had common ancestors. "Old Fritz" had a Hanoverian grandmother, the highly gifted but wilful Sophia Charlotte. The mother of the great Prussian king was a Hanoverian, Sophia Dorothea, daughter of King George I, the most definite type of the House of Hanover before Edward VII. George I embodied in himself those positive qualities which enabled these two royal children to resist successfully the attacks on their personalities.

George I of England was a model of defensive qualities. Autocrat of a German minor State, he arrived during that

period in the history of England which was richest in intrigues. Unable to speak English, ascending the throne at the beginning of English constitutional monarchism, he remained master for thirteen years, and then left to his son the personal reputation of the royal house consolidated and unimpaired. For this achievement alone he deserves particular respect. George I was fifty-four years old when he was brought from his beloved Hanover to England, to ensure the Protestant succession. The Catholic nobility, the Scots who had remained loyal to the Stuarts, Catholic Ireland, and both parties of Whigs and Tories who at Court and in the frame of the sham parliamentary constitutionalism were still fighting for power, and fought yet more bitterly for office, tried to make use of the King to further their own petty personal aims. They took advantage of the King's difficulty with the language. Whilst attributing every success to the good advice which they had given to their "outlandish" ruler, they charged the almost defenceless monarch with the responsibility for every political failure. And, to crown it all, George I, whose throne was based upon such unstable foundations, was well aware that all the notables who considered themselves entitled to be dissatisfied with him could find a target for their shafts in the Court of his son. The King, as English history proves, was a capable ruler. He was loyal to his friends, forgiving towards his enemies, and full of confidence in his Ministers. During his unobtrusive reign the English system of Party government developed until it formed a solid foundation for English constitutionalism, and it is not difficult to see that from this monarch must have been handed down qualities which may be recognized in the hero of the Seven Years War, and in the life work of Edward VII.

## THE SHADOW OF THE TUTOR

AN excellent thirty-year-old humanitarian and theologian, the Rev. H. M. Birch, was chosen as the first tutor of Prince Albert Edward, who could already speak and read English and German equally well, and who could also speak French. Mr. Birch had one great fault. Wherever possible he attempted to mingle with the father's inhuman system of education ideas of human love and the teachings of Christ. Though obviously not a strong character, he had a good brain and sufficient psychological insight to understand that the father's methods could be made endurable only if the growing boy's religious sentiments were strongly cultivated. During the first years of the Prince's education the greatest stress was therefore laid on religion as promoting obedience to his parents, belief in the wisdom of his elders, and a patient endurance of the unnatural limitations imposed upon his liberty.

The father, who paid due honour to religion only as an abstract ethical code, did not agree with this method. The boy did not get on quickly enough, and Birch opened up to the child a world of wonderful religious experiences which the father's rationalistic leanings had forbidden him. So Birch lost favour with the Prince Consort. He was replaced by a Mr. F. W. Gibbs, who was by training a lawyer, a man of puritanical temperament, and of mediocre culture. As the Prince was by now capable of a touching loyalty, the parting from Birch was a deep personal tragedy for him. A lady at the Court of Queen Victoria informs us that the departure of Birch was a source of great grief to him. During

the last weeks of Birch's tutorship the Prince gave many charming proofs of his devotion, often in the form of little notes and gifts which he secretly laid on his tutor's pillow.

Mr. Gibbs, the briefless lawyer, who educated the Prince from his tenth to his seventeenth year, entirely met the father's requirements. He was of humble birth, had been whipping-boy to the son of a nobleman and historian, and had himself been deprived of his youth; he therefore did not regard the suppression of the Prince's youth as an iniquity. This man, who had spent his youth and lived his life under constant oppression, only began to breathe when he was elected to the exalted position of tutor to the Prince. He saw no reason whatever to deviate even a hair's breadth from the views of the Prince Consort and Stockmar. For him there existed only one virtue—decorum. To his lawyer's soul it was natural to consider nice manners, correct dress, religion, and a sense of duty as the only factors in the common denominator of appropriate "rules of conduct." He himself was in appearance and deportment a personification of the well-dressed, passionless puritan, equally unmoved by all temptations. When he found that difficulties were caused by the father's plan of instilling book-knowledge into the Prince at an invariable but far too rapid rate, Gibbs made a half-hearted attempt at a limitation of the prescribed "uninterrupted studies." Prince Albert studied the report of the tutor as if it were a fever chart, and he decided that no attention could be paid to the pupil's objection to the excess of books through which he had to plough.

The isolation of the Prince was maintained according to plan. As a result of the Queen's protest against the loneliness of her son, a few Eton boys of noble parentage were occasionally invited to visit the Prince on Sundays, but only in the presence of the Prince Consort, "who filled the children with fear." At regular intervals the Prince was ordered

to write letters to relatives who lived outside London and Windsor. The boy could augment his lack of matter only by inserting in almost every sentence a proverb which he might happen to remember, or an appropriate biblical phrase, and he invariably had the honesty to put the borrowed sentence in inverted commas. Neither was he spared the obligation to keep a diary. Altogether his exalted parents paid the least imaginable consideration to their son's nervous system, which was anything but strong. When the Queen went to Paris with her thirteen-year-old son, they visited, among other notable places, the tomb of Napoleon at the Hôtel des Invalides. While a terrific thunderstorm raged over Paris the mother ordered the Prince, who was in Scotch dress, with knees uncovered, to kneel by the tomb of Napoleon I and to offer up a prayer.

The parents' instructions played an altogether monstrous part in the child's life. Gibbs once informed the father that it was the intention of the Prince, who in the meantime had been confirmed, to go to Communion on a certain day in July with his tutor and his equerry. The Prince-father thereupon composed a memorandum-like letter pointing out to his son how outrageous was such an intention, for the Prince Consort and Queen Victoria were in the habit of going to Holy Communion only twice a year, at Christmas and at Easter, and the Prince might find it difficult to "justify a deviation from this custom."

When the Prince was fourteen years old a difficult crisis ensued in the relationship between the parents and their son. They were dissatisfied with the amount of knowledge the Prince had acquired and they overwhelmed him with reproaches. The Prince, apparently suffering from the physical symptoms of his age, became constantly more nervous and undisciplined. Fits of the most violent anger against his

parents followed each other at short intervals, and at length Gibbs's initiative was aroused by the sufferings of his charge. Apparently driven by fear of being held responsible for the threatened complete nervous collapse of the Prince, Gibbs demanded that the "disciplinary education" should be relaxed. The scenes with the child, and the representations of the otherwise obsequious Gibbs, led the Prince Consort to discuss the problem of Prince Edward's education with his Minister, Lord Granville. Granville went straight to the point and demanded a healthy life for the Prince—who was permitted only a little croquet and riding as physical exercise—and the companionship of people of his own age. A stronger character than Gibbs, Granville explained to the Prince Consort the whole failure of the conception of the educational plan, and managed at least to arrange that the Prince should be permitted to travel in England and abroad, and even that he should be accompanied by suitable companions. But a diminution of the syllabus of bookish studies the father flatly refused.

A tour to the Lake District in the company of boys of his own age relieved the Prince for a short period from the oppression of his "disciplinary education." The sixteen-year-old boy and his friends chased a flock of sheep into a river, and the old wife of the shepherd hobbled after, scolding and threatening them with her stick. This, the only documented "naughtiness" of the Prince, was later on recorded by a drawing of the party. But the brevity and the happy tone of the entries in the Prince's diary of the tour frightened the father. In order to damp down the Prince's high spirits he suggested an immediate return to the strictest and most substained study. He did not succeed in carrying out his intentions forthwith, as another experiment was undertaken in the form of a tour to the Rhine and to Switzerland. On this tour the

young Prince captured everybody's heart, including old Metternich's—but the sum of his knowledge once more failed to increase in accordance with his father's desire.

Prince Albert's dissatisfaction with the intellectual progress of his son, and the latter's resistance to the completion of the educational plan, provided new sources of friction. The father, who, as the years passed and his physical vitality waned, became more and more pessimistic, decided to intensify still further his educational system. The Prince was practically interned out of sight of his family with his tutor in White Lodge, in Richmond Park. Three meritorious but out-of-date staff officers were appointed his equerries, to serve in monthly rotation. It was their task to make a gentleman of him and to impart to him military knowledge. This was the father's reply to the stormy demand of the boy to be allowed to enter the army and to follow a military career. The unfortunate equerries were also provided with a memorandum from the father as a guide to the Prince's education. This code treated in various chapters of the Prince's dress, his deportment towards others, and the appropriate manner in which he was to take part in a conversation or manage a difficult situation. The Prince was not allowed to lounge on seats or couches. His walk must always be erect, and he was not to put his hands in his pockets. Jokes in word or deed, as well as satirical expressions, were forbidden. Even in his free time the Prince had to occupy himself with music and art; and poems, books and plays were to be read to him. All the Prince's amusements, however modest their measure, must be so arranged as to afford him opportunity to exercise his mind. Whilst in White Lodge, it was strictly forbidden the Prince to have any personal intercourse with persons outside his own household. Occasional visits were allowed from persons of "distinction and mature age" who lived in the neighbourhood of Richmond.

The solitary confinement in Richmond under the supervision of Gibbs and the three equerries likewise failed to achieve the desired effect. The Prince would not settle down, and when he was eighteen years old Gibbs was induced to retire. A sour old Scotch colonel by the name of Bruce was then appointed military governor of the Prince, and invested with an authority yet more absolute than had been that of Gibbs. Colonel Bruce, who was hard and pedantic, had been in command of a battalion of the Grenadier Guards. He had not the slightest experience or ability which could qualify him for the profession of a tutor. The relentless severity of this martinet immediately seemed to the Prince's father to offer a sufficient guarantee of his suitability.

Bruce and his wife were endowed by the royal couple with the "place of parents, with every right and duty of parents." Bruce was required to regulate every movement of the Prince, to arrange how he employed his time, and to supervise every detail of his daily life. On his appointment it was suggested to Bruce that he should furnish the royal parents as often as possible with "analytical" reports on the character of his pupil. Those reports from the old soldier, who was lacking in every psychological quality required for his task, were fortunately sufficiently long to delight the Prince Consort highly, and to lead him to reply to them with equally long memoranda. The reports from Colonel Bruce afford a good insight into the result of the portentous educational system of Prince Albert. Bruce pointed out that his pupil despised learning and put too much significance on dress; that his reflective faculty was but slight; that he was listless and frequently fell into petty disputes. These comments from a tutor who had certainly no psycho-analytical knowledge prove how near to the borders of mental catastrophe the educational régime had brought the Prince. Before long, Bruce was, however, able to report that his pupil's

fits of temper were diminishing, that his so-called "egotism" no longer was so pronounced, and that the Prince made efforts to "improve himself." The unfeeling old Scot described the progress on the road of improvement as "slow and uncertain."

In the meantime his favourite sister, Princess Victoria, had married the Prussian Crown Prince, later on Kaiser Frederick, and on his most urgent petition Prince Edward was permitted to visit her in Potsdam. The Prince Consort, however, made it a condition that the plan of study must not be interrupted in Prussia, and that the Prince must be shown no courtesies or special attention. Bruce and the equerry who accompanied the Prince saw to it that the tuition was continued daily for four hours in the morning. The Crown Princess, who had received her instructions from her father, employed the leisure hours of such evenings as were at her disposal in promoting her younger brother's culture by reading to him so-called "good books." The only person who opposed "Prince Albert's educational discipline" was the old Kaiser. He treated the boy, who had so far known only the darker sides of life, to brilliant parties, and he encouraged the English Minister to make the Prince the centre of a few festivities. In Berlin, Edward attended "with much zest" his first dance.

The tour to Berlin had an enlivening, but, in the eyes of the father, of course, an undesirable effect. A humanistic note was now introduced into the plan of education. Accompanied by Bruce and a classical philologist, the Prince was sent to Rome to study archæology for some months, and proudly Bruce informed the father of how strictly he regulated the disposal of the Prince's time. Before breakfast the Prince must memorize certain work, and prepare exercises for his Italian lesson between 10 and 11. From 11 to 12 he studied classical languages. In the afternoon archæological

collections and museums were visited. From 5 to 6 there was a French lesson, and from 6 to 7 reading or music. As in Richmond, the Prince was permitted social intercourse only with persons of mature years who were selected by Bruce; and Colonel and Mrs. Bruce were host and hostess at the dinners which were given to these "ripe persons." The Prince mostly listened in silence, as he did not feel competent to take part in the learned discussions of the archæologists, professors, and theologists with whom Bruce surrounded him. Bruce revenged himself for the Prince's silence by sending to the father long analytical letters of complaint, wherein he emphasized the Prince's lack of interest.

The diary of the Prince speaks another language. On Maundy Thursday he was present at the customary washing of the feet of beggars by the Pope, and he noted, somewhat critically, that the Pope only lightly touched the feet of the beggars with a cloth. On the Good Friday, however, he witnessed a similar performance, and on this occasion he stated that the participating Cardinals really did wash the feet of a number of very dirty beggars. The Prince was allowed to watch the Roman Carnival only from a hired balcony or from a carriage. He recorded in his diary how admirable he found it that this exuberant festival always kept within the bounds of good fun, and how rough it would be if it were arranged in Regent Street.

When, after an absence of six months, the Prince returned to his parents' home, the Prince Consort insisted that his son's knowledge was still far from sufficient. The Prince replied to this observation by repeating his wish to become an officer. To what extent the educational régime had thrown the Prince's nerves into confusion, may be gathered from the fact that Bruce himself strongly urged the parents not to allow their son to enter the army. Oxford was to crown the "plan of study and reading." In spite of the

forcing-house type of upbringing to which the Prince had been subjected, the father considered that his son's general knowledge was insufficient for a sojourn at the University. In the gloomy castle of Holyrood a three-months' course of "special preparation" was therefore begun, to make the Prince ready for Oxford. The teachers whom the father and Bruce appointed were made to feel very awkward in the company of the Prince Consort. They were told that the Prince had no great intelligence, was far behind other boys of his own age, and incapable of concentration for more than a few minutes.

In Edinburgh Prince Edward's teachers were chosen for the first time for their educational abilities and not because they slavishly submitted to the father's ideas. The scientist Playfair and the humanist Schmitz were both experienced teachers. They interested the Prince in their subjects, and reported extremely favourably on the natural ability and intelligence of their pupil. These reports, which present such a striking contrast to the opinions of the former tutor of the Prince, who was incessantly complaining of his charge, led the Prince Consort to take a most unusual step. He went to Edinburgh and presided over an educational council consisting of all the teachers who had been concerned with the Prince's upbringing. After a free discussion of educational aims a new set of plans was once more prepared, this time for Oxford, and a sojourn in Cambridge University that was to follow.

The size of the conference, and the difference of opinions voiced there, prevented a frank consideration of the problem. Public protests appeared against the un-English and unsportsmanlike upbringing of the Prince. *Punch* attacked in satirical verse the series of mental forcing-houses through which the Prince was driven. When the formalities of his admission to Oxford were arranged, the father wanted to

THE ROYAL ROAD TO LEARNING

From *Punch*, October 29, 1859

set the crown on his system of internment: the Prince must not become a member of a special college, "as he will always belong to the whole nation, so he also belongs to the whole University without preference for any coterie." But the administrative body at Oxford immediately objected to this procedure and demanded that the Prince, like every other student, should join a definite college. He therefore entered Christ Church, where he was allowed to attend the service in the college chapel, and occasionally to dine in hall. A house was rented wherein the Prince was to live under the supervision of Colonel Bruce. Association with other students was practically forbidden. Six chosen students were, however, permitted to join the Prince's special course, which was substituted for the ordinary lectures. Contrary to the happy English idea of Oxford and what it signifies, the Prince Consort defined it in the following manner: "The only use of Oxford is that it is a place for study, a refuge from the world and its claims." Tennis and croquet were the only forms of sport in which the Prince was permitted to indulge, but Colonel Bruce, who evidently found greater physical exertion necessary, permitted his charge to ride occasionally to hounds. On these occasions some of his fellow students surreptitiously introduced him to tobacco, which Bruce had forbidden as a vice, and Prince Edward subsequently became the most inveterate chain-smoker among European princes.

In the year 1860 the Palmerston Cabinet demanded that the heir-apparent should undertake his first representative and political mission. Under the supervision of the Colonial Secretary, the Duke of Newcastle, and the inevitable Bruce, the Prince travelled to Canada and the United States. The youth who had been called intellectually backward, and had been treated as a school-boy even at the University, was on this tour expected to take the leading part, and to appear

at innumerable festivities and functions with the requisite social poise and ease of manner. This experiment succeeded beyond expectation. The Prince made the greatest possible effort to fulfil the expectations of his parents and of the Minister, in the hope that when he returned to England the way in which he had acquitted himself might ensure him a somewhat freer life. But he was disappointed. Two days after his arrival in England he had to report himself at Oxford, and once more fretfully to submit himself to be interned according to his father's ideas of education.

From Oxford the Prince was sent to Cambridge. Again he was forbidden to live in college or to make his own arrangements. As in Oxford, a house outside town was rented by Bruce and his wife, and the Prince's household was installed there. In Cambridge there again occurred violent scenes between the Prince, his father, and his governor. Towards the end of 1861 the Prince Consort went to Cambridge to settle a quarrel between pupil and tutors, and on this journey he contracted a cold and died soon afterwards of pneumonia. In 1857 Baron Stockmar had retired with a pension to Coburg. The first crisis in the tragedy of the life of Prince Edward had now reached its culminating point.

## CHAPTER III

# THE SHADOW OF THE DEAD

UNDER normal family circumstances, the Prince Consort's death would have afforded the Prince of Wales, who was now over twenty years of age, opportunities to extend his field of activity, chiefly in assisting his royal mother in a representative capacity during her period of mourning. This might have become the starting-point for more intensive participation in the duties appertaining to the sovereign.

During the first few weeks after the death of his father, while his mother was still completely overwhelmed by the loss, which had deprived her of the companion who for twenty years dexterously determined her actions without ever resorting to crude methods of domination, it seemed as if the Prince were now to reap the reward of the skill and resource he had shown during his American tour.

The Queen had been sincerely devoted to her husband who, in spite of his intellectual limitations and the narrowness of his views, possessed marked individuality and character, and during those first weeks she was inclined to seek the support of her eldest son, whose worldly wisdom was beyond doubt. Edward, who indeed had no reason to feel any particular tenderness for his narrow-minded father, and who throughout his life made no secret of the martyrdom he had suffered from the particular brand of morbid discipline devised by these two Germans, his father and Stockmar, gave, after his father's death, proof of a very unusual measure of tact. This young man of twenty, who could have felt nothing but relief at the sudden death of his father, which appeared to open at least a modest prospect of self-

determination in the development of his personality, undertook to reply, on behalf of his mother, to the many expressions of condolence from the leading statesmen of the Empire. His letters, which are published by Sir Sidney Lee in his biography of the King, testify to the consummate tact with which he entered into the mental state of the widow who had blindly idolized her husband.

In Court circles it was generally assumed that the deeply sorrowing widow would now turn to her charming and tactful son, who took by storm the hearts of high and low whereever he went, and ask him to take over that part of her duties which the Prince Consort had executed for his royal spouse. Even that crabbed old Scotchman, the Prince's military governor, Colonel Bruce, considered it a matter of course that after the death of the Prince Consort the educational methods, founded merely on the suppression of the natural inclinations of the heir of the throne, would come to an end.

But they reckoned without the influence of the dead, of the Prince Consort, and of Stockmar, who was now eking out a miserable existence in his invalid chair in Coburg. At the beginning of the sixties of last century Queen Victoria was no longer the fresh and exuberant Hanoverian princess who, happily free from any trace of puritanism, paid off her mother's Irish lover on her accession to the throne in order to commence her rule free from moral taint. For two decades the gardener of a woman's soul, Albert of Coburg, had trimmed, regulated, and toned down the healthy instincts of his wife. Contemporaries of Queen Victoria during the first twenty years of her reign are unanimous in their remarks as to how every expression of *joie de vivre* had been drilled out of his pretty young wife by the Prince Consort as sinful hankerings after worldly pleasures. The school-masterish German descendant of the declining race of the petty Thuringian

princes had, by means of persevering and pedantic labours, won a victory over the virile forces of the Guelphs, a domination achieved by a narrow intellectualism, by knowing at each step just a little more and just a little better what was right than the Queen, who had been called to her task at a rather too early age. In the first ten years of her reign the Queen became more joyless, more estranged from life. Finally she could see the world only through the eyes of her husband, who was striving for an unnatural, cold-blooded, and rational saintliness. Albert of Coburg, in contrast to the Belgian and German members of his house, was anything but the worldly-wise and healthy-minded product of his strongest moral heritage: he was a pathological type.

In the England of the first third of the nineteenth century, which was animated by a healthy love of the good things of life, in the country which Thackeray in his *Vanity Fair* not only satirized but also glorified, the narrow-minded German prince, learned but not wise, always felt like a stranger. Instead of trying to get on friendly terms with the instincts of his adopted country by showing an interest in sport, games, pomp and prestige, the Prince adopted a defensive attitude from the moment he set foot on British soil. He was "misunderstood," he was "Nora" in the *Doll's House* of British joy of life. He was the moral factor which, through the punctilious fulfilment of duty, endeavoured in vain to compel not love, for which he would have had to woo, but respect, which a stronger man might have enforced.

Albert of Coburg, who could rest content with the rôle of a highly paid Prince Consort without accepting the limitations of such a position with good grace, was neither a Charles of Sweden nor a Louis Ferdinand of Prussia. He was an average type, well-trained but without any great capacities —either for good or evil. He suffered from the inferiority

complex of the man who throughout his life never succeeds in winning the whole of anyone's esteem. And every inferiority complex finds a compensatory outlet in the haughty treatment of inferiors and dependants.

An embarrassment to which the kings of the House of Hanover from George I to George III had been subjected was that the opposition of the moment—disgruntled courtlings, aggrieved sons of the aristocracy, and city magnates who thought they were not sufficiently noticed—took refuge at the Courts of the heirs to the throne, there to vent their grievances. The First and the Second Georges were robust fellows enough—as was also the Third George as long as his health was good—typical eighteenth-century Guelphs, stiff-necked, impervious to flattery, and to a high degree indifferent to opposition so long as this was confined to the personal grievances and demands of self-seekers, but ready to fight it if it had any general background. The "unmerited defensive" into which Albert of Coburg felt himself driven in England, the cold, superficial respect with which he was met by Society, the distrust with which the Ministers of his wife regarded him, combined with the fact that his naturalistic and technical hobbies were the sole activities left to him, of necessity fed the suspicion of a small mind that his son, the Englishman by birth and withal specially favoured in outward appearance, would again become, like the heirs to the throne of former generations, the centre of an opposition against his parents, and more particularly against his "outlandish" father. Hence the Coburg Prince's fear of his son's youthful associates, the veto on sport and games, and the education which was more suitable for the son of a German rural dean than for the successor to the English crown.

The son, like Frederick the Great, more a Guelph than the offspring of a Serene Highness, reacted to his father's

attempts at isolation and suppression by nerve storms. As he grew older and his knowledge of the world increased, and especially after he so brilliantly acquitted himself on his American tour, the Prince must have appeared constantly more of a menace to his father, who under constitutional law was powerless. This apprehension expressed itself in increased coercion: Birch, Gibbs and Bruce represented successive stages on the road which was intended to lead to the extinction of the Prince's individuality. As they could not prevail against the strong hereditary traits of the House of Hanover, the Prince Consort remained a prey to ever-increasing misgivings. The only one in the Prince Consort's world who had responded to his influence and discipline was his wife, the mother of his children. It was to her, with the destructive arguments of the doctrinaire, and an oppressive display of learning, that this small mind unburdened itself of all the anxiety which the son caused him. The Queen did not dare to contradict, because the history of her race gave colour to the observations and experiences of her husband, and bore out his thesis that the person of the heir to the throne is always a menace to the authority of the reigning monarch. During the last two-thirds of her reign, Queen Victoria was proud of one thing only, that she had been able, by an exemplary private life and strict attention to her duties as a constitutional ruler, to enhance and permanently secure, after a period of alarming decline, the prestige of her dynasty. Dangers which threatened the prestige of the royal family were therefore a threat to her most personal contribution to history. The Guelph is a good fighter for his patrimony and his offspring.

The anxiety of her husband increased the latent fears of the Queen, who, although a woman of few parts, was exceedingly alive to her position. The warnings of her healthy instincts were silenced by the father's fears and anxieties,

which were logically presented, based on historical fact, and supported by numerous "analytical reports," out of which spoke the voice of the narrow-minded but not unintelligent governor. Even if the mother were occasionally willing to fight for a modicum of human freedom for her son, the queen prevailed against the mother.

The theory that the heir to the throne might be a menace to the sovereign had a stronger appeal to her than the prospect that there was advantage to be derived from enlisting outside sympathies in favour of the royal family through the person of a native British prince. The Prince Consort cleverly nurtured the Queen's fears. No observer of English social conditions will maintain that a scholarly disposition is the road to popularity in England. One may know a great deal, but one's friends should never be made aware of the extent of one's knowledge. In the same way as one does not boast of the number of one's acres, servants, hunters, or fox-hounds, one does not show off the trained inmates of one's mental racing-stable. For the Prince to ensure that his son should not become the popular and idolized centre of those who were dissatisfied with the royal Court, there was no better way than to make of him a pretentious scholar. Only the failure of his father's efforts in this direction qualified the Prince for the part his forebears had played. While the Prince Consort and his friends fostered the pretence that the Prince was poorly equipped mentally, unable to concentrate and without "higher interests," his mother was fortified in her belief that her son, like the Second and Fourth Georges, was predestined to attract to himself all the superficial and unreliable politicians and courtiers, to whom the puritan royal Court could offer no chance of success or promotion.

For these reasons the father's death could bring no material alleviation of his position to the Prince, nor could it open up possibilities of a free development. His mother, whose sus-

picion had been artificially aroused and systematically nurtured, and who, moreover, had now frequent premonitions of an early death, imagined after her husband's decease that she was now facing alone a great danger.

There was no need for her to fear her son, for the England of 1860 was not in the least like that of 1760. No longer did fifty families with their hangers-on rule the country under the pendulum-like swing of a system of alternating Whigs and Tories. The electoral franchise had been widened. The material achievement of a Government had a more decisive bearing on its duration than the desire of another coterie to get into office and obtain benefices. It was not the Prince, the problematic ruler of to-morrow, but the masses, now in the ascendant, who had become the dominant factor of the next election. In the middle of last century no statesman had any interest in playing off the sovereign against the heir-apparent. On the contrary, each Party's greatest interest lay in preserving the neutrality of the royal house, because any politician might find himself in the position of having to make an appeal to the "fair play" of the sovereign in connexion with the dissolution of Parliament, or the nomination of candidates for the peerage. Palmerston, Peel, Disraeli and Gladstone, who were all great practical politicians, preferred playing on the sensitive instrument of public opinion to taking part in Court intrigues.

The Prince Consort had been unable, in spite of all his scholarship, to instil into his wife a clear conception of the status of a constitutional queen. Although not by any means of a scholarly disposition, she was nevertheless exceedingly level-headed and sensible, and it was due to the long and patient educational efforts of the great statesmen who governed England from the middle of last century that the daughter of the Guelphs was brought to a realization of the limits of royal power.

When the Prince Consort died, the Queen had certainly not yet realized that no English Party, nor any statesman of repute under the system of government in England, could have the slightest interest in taking undue advantage of the position and influence of the Prince of Wales. In supressing the Prince's personality and inclinations in even a firmer manner than her husband had done, the Queen therefore considered herself not only the pious executor of her husband's mental and spiritual will, but also the guardian of her own power, position and dignity. To Colonel Bruce's question as to whether there would be any change in the system of educating the Prince after his father's death, the Queen gave the following answer:

"About the children she has had many conversations with her beloved angel and she feels that she knows exactly what he wished. This being the case the Queen must decide what she thinks the best and the least likely to injure them permanently. She is ready to take the responsibility of this decision as she feels sure she is acting as he would wish."

To her uncle King Leopold of the Belgians she expressed herself even more unconditionally when she wrote:

"No human power will make me swerve from what he decided and wished. . . . I apply this particularly as regards our children—Bertie, etc.—for whose future he had traced everything so carefully. I am also determined that no one person, may he be ever so good, ever so devoted, among my servants—is to lead, or guide, or dictate to me."

The Queen's design of keeping the Prince of Wales under the strictest supervision, and without sufficient occupation for an adolescent man, was strengthened by a very comprehensible psychological reaction of public opinion after the death of her husband. Even before his American tour Canada had asked for the Prince to be appointed Governor-General. Several Ministers had made representations to the

Queen and the Prince Consort about the unnatural education of the Prince. The cramming to which the Prince had been subjected had called forth the ridicule of politicians, the aristocracy, and the organs of public opinion. During the Prince Consort's lifetime, little hope was entertained of bringing about an improvement towards a more English conception of the problem of education. The failure of the Prince's education was accounted against the "German bookworm." After the Prince Consort's death, public opinion, supported by the constitutional advisers, hoped to exert a stronger influence on the English queen. An outside event offered a welcome opportunity.

Under the auspices of the Prince Consort, plans had been made for an international exhibition, and it was opened in the spring of the year 1862—exactly three months after his death. It was obvious that the sorrowing royal widow would not be able to arrange any festivities for the numerous important foreign visitors. But the Prince of Wales had proved by the success of his American tour that, surrounded by trained Court officials, he could very well be trusted to represent the royal family at all the more important ceremonies. The Queen vigorously opposed all such suggestions. Accompanied by Colonel Bruce, the Prince was obliged to undertake his educational journey to Egypt and Palestine, as planned by his father. The Queen instructed the Prince's governor "to see that the Prince concentrated on serious thoughts, and to keep the possibility before his mind, that his widowed mother might die during his absence of a broken heart." But Fate had better things in store for the Prince. Colonel Bruce contracted malaria on the journey, and died soon after his return to England. Once more, as after the death of his father, the Prince showed his exquisite tact. In letters to his friends he wrote much in appreciation of his old tutor, thereby showing a nice discrimination between

the originator and the instrument of his disastrous education.

The news of Bruce's death gave fresh hope to public opinion and London Society that the Prince would be allowed a larger share of personal freedom and representative occupation. In the Queen's surroundings there arose lively opposition to the appointment of a new military tutor for the Prince, particularly as there was an immediate prospect of his betrothal to the Princess Alexandra of Schleswig-Holstein. But the Queen remained adamant against all such representations. She found a new military tutor in the sixty-five-year-old Sir William Knollys, who had been military tutor to the Prince's father when the latter, ignorant of English military conduct and traditions, became Consort to the young Queen. Knollys was the first man of flesh and blood to enter the Prince's circle. He received thousands of instructions and regulations from the mother, but he only conformed to them "in so far as they could be applied in the case of the Prince." As he advanced in years the new tutor became more lenient, and his pupil harder, more reserved, and more intent on cleverly eluding the rules and prohibitions than on storming against them. Knollys was the first tutor of whom the Prince gave a favourable report. He wrote of him:

"A thorough gentleman, a well-informed man with plenty of tact, and an agreeable companion."

In his twenties the Prince reached a state of greater equanimity. His nervous attacks almost entirely ceased, and the natural Coburg common sense showed the young Prince ways in which he could obtain a considerable amount of personal freedom without direct conflict with his mother or her representatives. The path to freedom cost the Prince many a sacrifice, and even to the end of his life he had not achieved his heart's desire—a man's work for a man's

strength. To get away from the influence of his father and his German mentor Stockmar, who, in the mother's mind, had assumed in the meantime gigantic proportions, the Prince had to make yet one more compromise—a too-early marriage.

CHAPTER IV

# THE SHADOW OF MARRIAGE

THE betrothal of the Prince of Wales with Alexandra, daughter of the future King Christian of Denmark, which took place at Windsor on the 10th of March 1863, was arranged in a peculiar way. In principle and in theory the parents considered that their son had the right to choose his own life companion; in practice they acted in flagrant contradiction to this view of the matter. From the Prince's eighteenth year onwards the parents and King Leopold of the Belgians had occupied themselves conversationally and in writing solely with one theme: How could the young Prince marry most advantageously? Even in this, the most personal concern of every human being, the infernal "memorandum" played a prominent part. This time it was neither Stockmar nor the Prince Consort but the King of the Belgians who was its author. Some years before an official betrothal could take place, King Leopold, who was, in a worldly sense, the most successful dynast of the House of Coburg, sent the Queen a list of names of seven German princesses who would be ripe for marriage when the Prince was grown up, with notes on their personal and material advantages. As the Queen had already decided to consider only a princess who would submit to the dictates of the mother-in-law, the powerlessness of the bride's parents played a more important part in the selection than those material considerations for which the Belgian uncle—a highly gifted financier—showed such a lively interest. The princesses who ranged on the Belgian list as numbers one to four, and whom old King Leopold had marshalled in the order of their merit, were turned down because of the per-

sonal qualities and the strong positions of their parents. The Queen preferred Princess Alexandra, a daughter of the Prince of Schleswig-Holstein, who at that time was not considered to be in a strong position.

The Queen's eldest daughter was first commissioned to "judge the points" of the young Princess at a friendly German Court. The Prussian Crown Princess reported that she was quite carried away by the beauty and charm of the young lady of Holstein. A meeting was then arranged between the Prince of Wales and the Princess. It was most successful. The Prince seemed much impressed, without, however, expressing any desire for an early marriage. Unlike his mother and the King of the Belgians, he did not regard the question of his marriage as a pressing one, for as there was a number of younger brothers in the family there was no question of the throne being left without an heir. When the Queen realized that her son, though not really indifferent to the bride selected for him, was uninterested in the subject of marriage itself, she decided that some definite steps must be taken to induce him to exhibit a more lively interest in the matter. To this end she impressed upon the most influential members of his circles, and above all on General Bruce, the necessity of convincing the Prince that, when married and in control of his own household, he could certainly count upon enjoying a greater measure of personal liberty.

The Prince, who knew quite well that he must one day marry and that his mother's approval would be necessary, raised no opposition, and the Queen and her Ministers were allowed a free hand in the arrangement of his marriage. He would probably not have agreed so lightly to a marriage arranged on such an unsatisfactory basis had he had the opportunity of getting to know his future wife more intimately, but in this matter the Queen shared the opinion of the majority of the middle-class women of her country, that

it was unseemly and unfitting for a betrothed couple to see much of each other before marriage. In the autumn of 1862, before the signing of the marriage contract by England and Denmark, the Queen found it necessary to get to know her future daughter-in-law personally, and before her arrival in England the Prince was sent off on a tour abroad.

During a three-weeks' stay of the Princess Alexandra at the English Court, the Queen made two disclosures to her. She pointed out that she herself and not the Prince would direct the Court procedure and the daily life of the young pair; and that the Prince, whom the Queen thought easily led, must not be imbued with the Danish domestic and political ideas of his prospective wife's father. The Queen must have given her future daughter-in-law to understand, with surprising candour and even harshness, that all sympathy for Denmark on the young Princess's part must be suppressed as soon as she set foot on English soil. The English royal house was of princely German blood, connected only with German princes, and it had no intention of embroiling itself in quarrels with its German relatives through sympathy for Denmark in the long-drawn-out Prusso-Danish conflict. Having been told by her father, who was destined to occupy the Danish throne, that her betrothal to the heir to the English throne would raise enormously the prestige of Denmark, the Princess acquiesced in these conditions.

Thus the commencement of the married life of two clever, handsome people, who seemed capable of enjoying great human happiness, was accompanied by circumstances which were bound to have evil after-effects.

At first it seemed as if the only result of the arrangement between the Queen and her daughter-in-law would be that of bringing the young pair closer together. The Crown Princess, an unusually gifted woman, soon succeeded—just because it was forbidden by the mother—in getting her hus-

band on the Danish side in the conflict over the Duchies on the Elbe. This sympathy of the Prince for the country ruled by his father-in-law was indirectly influenced by the attitude of his own relatives.

The future Empress Frederick, at that time Prussian Crown Princess, was an opponent of Bismarck's policy, and she entered into correspondence with her brothers and sisters in order to further the candidature of Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein. The younger sister, Alice, who was married to the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, was also opposed to Bismarck's policy. The wife and the two favourite sisters influenced Prince Edward against Prussia and against Bismarck, two terms for a long time synonymous to him.

Associated with these anti-Prussian influences in the intimate family circles was the equally strong pro-Danish spirit in the English Parliament and Press. The Prince was endowed from his earliest youth with finely developed feeling for the moods and fluctuations of public opinion. When sympathizing with English intervention in favour of Denmark, he undoubtedly thought not only of complying with the suggestions of his family circle, but also of placing himself at the head of a national movement which, sooner or later, would force the Ministers to act—either by supporting Denmark or by interceding for a peace favourable for that country. He miscalculated, however, in two main points. He under-estimated his mother's strong determination to guard England's neutrality, and he under-estimated the hesitancy of the English Ministers, Palmerston and Gladstone, engendered by the thought of a repetition of the costly and dangerous experiment of a European war at a moment when the country's finances were just beginning to recover from the consequences of the Crimean War and the insurrection in India. There were violent scenes between mother and son. The mother demanded from the Prince absolute neutrality

in all his conversations in Society. The Prince, as heir-apparent, asked for at least comprehensive information as to the political situation. The Queen would not grant him this right, and forced him to glean from the newspapers an inexact and naturally anti-Prussian impression of political events. The Prince, more sensitive with regard to his personal dignity than most people of his age and of his time, never forgot the humiliation to which his mother had thus subjected him.

Soon after the end of the Prusso-Danish War the Prince desired to visit, in company with his wife, his parents-in-law in Copenhagen. This demand the Queen at first absolutely refused. Then the aged Palmerston intervened on behalf of the Prince. The Queen consented only when the Prince gave an undertaking to Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg, who was then in England, that he would put the greatest restraint upon himself regarding political affairs whilst in Denmark. This, it was reasonably expected, would be passed on to Berlin. To avoid giving the journey any appearance of being pro-Danish, the return journey must be made via Germany.

Whilst these conflicts were going on in the royal castle, Queen Victoria anxiously continued to play the part of a deeply sorrowing widow, shunning alike all Court functions and representative festivities. The duty of attending the unavoidable necessary Court functions developed upon the young couple, who soon became the darlings of London society. They were seen everywhere, but from the demeanour and conversation of the Prince, it became more and more obvious that he was really just the well-bred and well-groomed State prisoner of his mother.

## CHAPTER V

# THE CONSTITUTIONAL CROWN PRINCE

WHEN it became obvious to the general public that the Queen was leading nothing more than a hermit's life on her country estates, desirous of remaining invisible, ruling them as from a cell, the dissatisfaction of the populace and the nobility was concentrated into a demand that she should renounce the throne in favour of her son. But although the Queen, when in the bosom of her family and friends, continued to flirt with the idea that she would soon die of a broken heart and see her angel again, she resisted *intra muros*, with immense vitality, even the most moderate proposal on the part of her Ministers to widen the scope of the rights and duties of her son. Even after his marriage the son remained under maternal supervision. If the young couple, in the fulfilment of the social duties neglected by the Queen, had participated in a quick succession of festivities, an exhortation to the son always followed, hoping that by intensive study of good and serious books, he would try to forget frivolous and superficial amusements.

Several of the Ministers paid no heed to the Queen's order that her son must receive no information on the subject of politics, or cleverly circumvented it. The ambassadors and envoys of foreign lands, who were even quicker than the English politicians to recognize and value the surpassing gift for foreign politics and the positively uncanny knowledge of men possessed by the heir to the throne, seized every opportunity, of course without binding their countries to anything, to inform the Prince of and to discuss with him the weightiest problems in world politics. Only one diplomat, the Prussian Ambassador, Count Bernstorff, made an in-

glorious exception. At Court and in Society, on the plea of honouring the wishes of Queen Victoria, instead of at least making the attempt to give him authentic information on the truly not untransparent policy of his great chief, Bismarck, he positively "cut" the Prince.

Among the older statesmen and diplomats, who could remember by hearsay the time when the Court of the successor was a nest of intrigue against the royal policy, there developed an ever-increasing uneasiness at the manner in which information was withheld from the Prince, and at the unnatural limitation of his sphere of action. A man deeply interested in history and foreign politics, who could glean information about the affairs of his country only from foreigners and from newspapers, would normally have become the puppet of schemers, whose intrigues might easily create a situation possibly menacing not only for the Prince, but for England. Lord Howden wrote on the 4th of June 1864 to the Minister, Lord Clarendon, that in view of the state of mind in which the Queen had been since she became a widow, she would have done well in abdicating when her son came of age in November 1862. She would then have left behind her a great name and the people's regret. But he believed that it was not yet too late to take this step.

This verdict of the diplomat and politician should be contrasted with the fact that, at all functions and festivities at which the young couple were present, the popular song of a cheap poet, "God Save the Prince of Wales," came near to supplanting "God Save the Queen" as the national anthem. When one considers the symbolical significance of the national anthem in England—the doxology of every concert, play, music-hall performance, electioneering meeting—one can well appreciate the significance of this. Between Prince Edward and the throne there stood only the conscience of a constitutional-minded heir-apparent.

The intensity of monarchist feeling among the English people has always been a secondary reflection of the political development of France. After the French Revolution, when the invalid George III faded more or less into the background, and his son, inclined to excess in every form, took the centre of the stage in Court and Society, there was a noticeable cooling off in devotion towards the dynasty, which in a sense had always been felt to be "outlandish." The feelings of the English nobility and middle classes towards their royal house, which swung from one extreme to the other, were decided in the subconscious mind of the masses by the events of the seventeenth century. A people whose élite had carried out the sentence of death upon their King and had driven away the son of the executed man, held quite a different view of the royal house from the nobility and middle classes of European countries, whose ultimate aim and desire was always to bask in the sun of the royal favour. The French Revolution and the French *coups d'état* of 1830 and 1848 could not fill England's nobility and middle classes with the same "horror" as they did the "loyal minds" east of the French frontier. Public opinion in England could quote historical precedent for the necessity of getting rid of a ruler.

Stronger than in any other European nation was the feeling of the English people that the relations between prince and people rested on the observance of an unwritten covenant which, just because it was unwritten, must be all the more scrupulously carried out and generously interpreted. If a conflict arose abroad between a monarch and his people, the Englishman, as a matter of course, simply enquired who had broken the contract by overstepping the boundary line which marked the limitation of power. This conception also involved a certain reaction to his own royal house. If, on the whole, one admitted another nation's right to set aside rulers

who were incompetent, or who did not honour the covenant entered into by people and ruler, then the question naturally arose as to how it stood with one's own relationship towards the reigning house. The probing of the case could be carried out all the more dispassionately because it dealt with a royal house which had ruled in England barely a century, and that only by virtue of the incidental attribute of belonging to the Protestant faith, which gave it the right of succession.

While the bloody deeds of the French Revolution at first rendered English public opinion uneasy and offended their moral susceptibilities, the balance was soon adjusted by Napoleon's activities. From the first moment of his accession to power Napoleon had roused the greatest opposition in England; but at the same time there was an equally great respect for his rise, for his personal capabilities, and for his work as a statesman, which had turned the France of feudalism into a modern united State. Even to-day there is still a feeling among Englishmen that Napoleon I was the greatest man, and intellectually the most significant adversary, who ever opposed the advance of the English world-empire.[1] A revolution which, in spite of all the arbitrary and bloody acts which accompanied it, had thrown off through a Napoleon the dominion of the Bourbons could not appear "monstrous" to the English, who had beheaded Charles I to make way for a Cromwell. The French Revolution was the forerunner of a decline in English adherence to the monarchy as a form of government, and for this the royal house itself was partly to blame. A few decades later when the French again dethroned their King, who had but little to recommend him personally, and the English had an opportunity of getting to

[1] The success of Emil Ludwig's *Napoleon* in the English-speaking world is significant of this psychological regard in England for the figure of Napoleon. The book, which freed the English from the set school-book conception of Napoleon, met half-way the instinctively respectful regard of the English people.

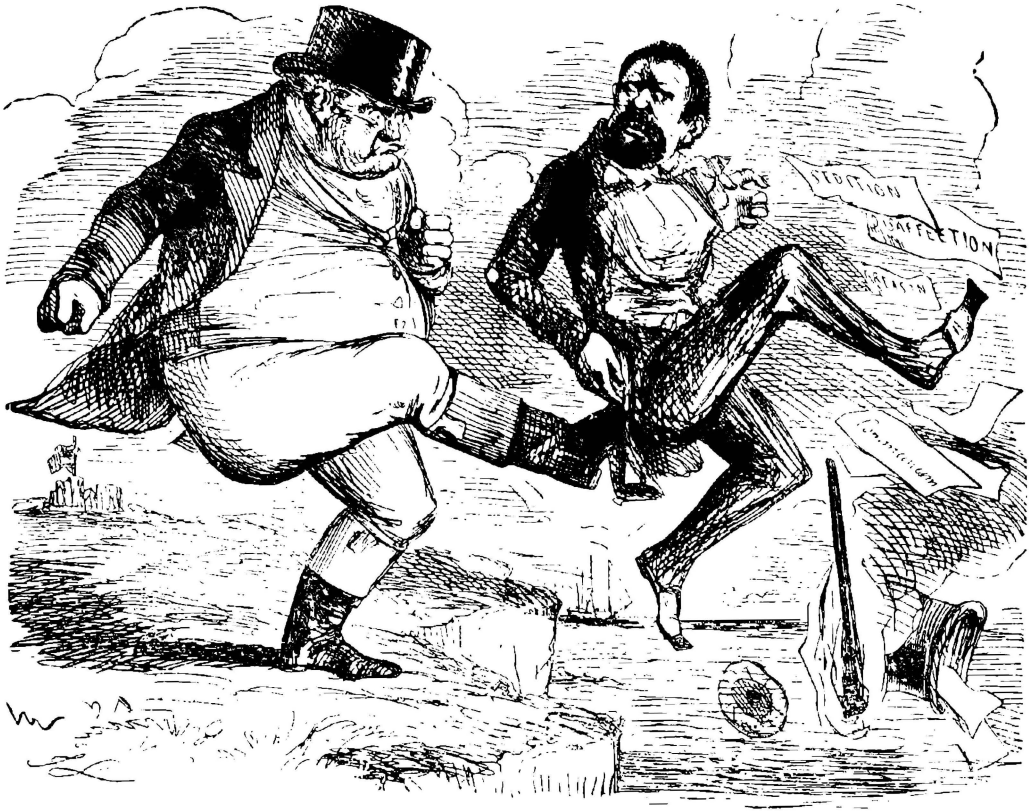
know the "deported" royalties in exile on English soil, this act of democratic justice also lost any savour of a breach of faith.

The reaction of French events in the year 1830 on the English feelings towards their royal house was exceedingly strong. In 1830 died George IV, the most disagreeable person who ever represented the Guelphs, and he was succeeded on the throne by his brother, an old man of limited intelligence. Reading critically, not only literally but between the lines, the memoirs of the English statesmen of this epoch, examining the feeling underlying their contents, the impression one retains is that the progressive elements of the English ruling class harboured strong doubts as to the possibility of assuring the continuation of the monarchical constitution in England. At any rate the English middle class and a great part of the nobility agreed on one point, namely, that only through an extension and consolidation of the people's rights would a continuance of the monarchy be possible, embodied as it was at that time in so unattractive a dynasty. The Reform Bill of 1832, which for the first time admitted the broad mass of the English middle classes to a voice in the affairs of State and to a political career, was a compromise between ruler and people. By granting the people great political influence and a wider choice of leaders, the ruler had, so to say, bought an indulgence for the many personal and political shortcomings of his House.

When a change of government took place in France in the year 1848, a strong reaction in the feeling of the people was anticipated in England. Nothing occurred, however, because the Reform Bill of 1832 constituted a safety valve for the people's passions, and a succession of incapable rulers had been followed by a monarch whose personality was more in keeping with the people's ideas, namely, Queen Victoria. By leading an exemplary family life, by a whole-hearted partic-

ipation in all endeavours for the people's welfare, by an outward conduct of life which put dignity in the place of pomp, and by a fair interpretation of the constitutional rights and duties of the ruler, the Queen and the Prince Consort rendered the greatest service to the dynasty—they kept the popular feeling for it alive. In the spring of 1848, when most European thrones were tottering, the English throne stood more firmly than ever before, as the conduct of the royal family gave no reason for any effective anti-monarchist agitation. The fears aroused in the royal circle as to the continued existence of the English monarchy had no actual significance. They had one good result, however; they induced the Queen, as long as her husband was alive, so to regulate her conduct that all friction between prince and people ceased. To the Queen this kind of behaviour was all the easier as both she and her husband suffered from an acute inferiority-complex in connection with the English aristocracy. She hated in her inmost soul the regal style of living which the English magnates were able to keep up in their households. She liked the Prussian nobility of the officer and Civil Servant kind, which one met in various forms also in the other smaller German Courts, a nobility which had won its promotion from the middle class by devoted, incessant, and often enough poorly rewarded work for the royal house and the State. The English nobility, whose pedigrees dated back to the days of the Norman Conquest, who lived in splendour and who were much richer than the royal house, dependent as it was on its civil list, seemed to the Queen a "superfluous class of idlers" whose downfall could only be for the good of the State. Thus, in 1848, the English royal house did not head the old "privileged" classes who were trembling in anticipation of the loss of their prerogatives.

The Prince Consort had undoubtedly mentally dominated the Queen, and his death was not only a violent shock to her,




JOHN BULL'S ALIEN ACT

Bull. "I'll 'propaganda' you, you meddling French scoundrel. Take that—"

From *Punch*, April 29, 1848

but above all it intensified her morbid attitude of mind towards her rights and duties. Because her deceased husband had always played the most important part in her life, the sorrowing widow demanded in her capacity as Queen that the whole nation should share her mood. The English nation, however, could not regard the Prince Consort's death as the fearful misfortune which the Queen considered it to be. The Prince Consort had always been approached with that attitude of mistrust accorded to all strangers who are really "foreign" in type to the Englishman, and who seek to create for themselves spheres of activity in England. During the lifetime of the Prince the people had accepted the fact that the husband took upon himself part of the representative duties of the wife, who had borne nine children in the space of sixteen years. After a set period of mourning, the English people required that its comparatively highly salaried royal representative should again take up her duties. This demand was, however, flatly rejected by the Queen. The people would perhaps have accepted her decision without much opposition had the Queen at the right moment, and in an irreproachably constitutional form, handed over the most important representative powers of the Throne to the popular heir and his beautiful young wife.

Instead of this, the idea spread among the people that the Queen, in order to provide a bigger dowry for her daughters, saved year by year large portions of her allowance, and opposed violently any widening of the Prince's field of activity which might entail expenditure beyond what was absolutely necessary. It did not increase the Queen's popularity when, soon after the Prince of Wales's marriage, it became known that the young couple were in continual financial difficulties, because Queen Victoria did not contribute, from the sums which she saved, towards the cost of the duties which the Prince performed as her representative.

In the middle of the sixties there was a rumour in Court circles that the Prince, always in desperate straits for money, associated with the most gifted Jewish leaders of the English financial aristocracy and extended to them his strong social protection only in order to obtain advances on his annual revenue without having to make humiliating petitions to his mother. These rumours could not be hushed up, for they were to some extent founded on fact. The Queen, whose annual allowance amounted to several hundred thousand pounds, lived like a well-to-do middle-class widow; while the State allowance to the Prince of Wales and his wife, who really had to keep up the royal Court of England, only amounted to £40,000. (This income was augmented by the revenue from the Duchy of Cornwall—£60,000 per annum.)

The Queen's voluntary seclusion since the death of her husband continually gave rise to the question as to why the English people should provide annually considerable funds from the State's coffers for such an unsatisfactory representation on the part of the royal house. The English taxpayer was annoyed because, having placed a princely income at the disposal of his Queen for the services which were unsatisfactorily performed, it was apparently used to enable her to marry off, within a short time, her three daughters to penniless husbands. While the middle classes showed their indignation at the Queen's retirement, which had lasted far beyond the normal period of mourning, the dissatisfaction among the working classes was growing. The housing shortage, the stoppage of Lancashire's textile industry in consequence of the American Civil War, the encouragement the anarchists received through the bomb outrages by the Irish Nationalists in the heart of London and in England's large ports and provincial towns, created a favourable breeding-ground for a radical anti-monarchist agitation among the workers. Rus-

sian anarchists, German and French socialists, Garibaldi and his companions of the same mind, all sought and found a refuge in England at that time. In the Colonies things did not seem much better. The French and the Irish Canadians, the Boers in South Africa, four-fifths of the Irish people, and the races defeated in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, all were in a state of revolutionary ferment.

Such was the situation when leading politicians, writers, and financiers, in the interests of the safety of the constitutional monarchy, began to consider seriously the abdication of the Queen in favour of her sensible son, who would endear the royal house to the people. These discussions, of which but scanty authentic proof exists, went so far that in the course of the sixties, it rested only with Prince Edward whether he would accept the crown if it were renounced by his mother. All proposals of this kind were frustrated by the Prince's own conception of loyalty to the Constitution.

The Prince of Wales, who in this regard more than in all others, resembled that Prussian king who proudly called himself "the first servant of his State," had from his earliest youth looked upon himself as the Deputy of his people, as their "first citizen." Sir Sidney Lee, the Prince's biographer, sums up his political confession of faith as follows:

"The main political opinions to which the Prince was faithful through life reflected Lord Palmerston's creed, of which the chief articles were the maintenance of England's dominant influence in the world, the dissemination through Europe of the principles of constitutional government and of constitutional liberty, the protection of subject races from oppression, confidence in the value of religious toleration, and a suspicion of abrupt change in established institutions at home. In course of time the Prince went further than the Palmerstonian gospel in his sympathies with social reform, in his antipathy to anything savouring of revolution, and in

his dislike for war, save as a last resort in settling international disputes. But he never faltered in his faith in a spirited foreign policy, coupled with the maintenance of a strong navy, or in his conviction that constitutional monarchy was the best of all forms of government."

Although the Prince was never active in Party politics, he was—one might almost say instinctively rather than intellectually—in sympathy with Liberalism. He was the first member of a reigning royal house to recognize the necessity for and the legality of the trades union movement. As member of the Royal Commissions on old age pensions and on the housing conditions of the working classes, he evinced a personal interest for the most progressive social-political ideas of his time.

In personal intercourse the handsome, well-grown man with the lively eyes had the gift of always being receptive to new ideas. As a result he constantly attracted to him eminent personalities, and in this he was a striking contrast to his nephew, the Kaiser. All efforts of his mother to isolate him, to rule him out of State affairs, to close his avenues of information, were frustrated, not by Court intrigues, but by the leading statesmen of the country. Irrespective of Party, they were all desirous that the Prince should take part in all public affairs and projects, as they considered him to be intellectually a great man.

Prince Edward would have found it easier than any other isolated heir to become king before the death of the reigning monarch, by means of a "revolution from above." But he had inherited from his great ancestor, George I, a deep veneration and reverence, almost verging on the mystical, for the sanctity of the constitutional bond between prince and people. Because of his naturally strong political gifts, which were very definitely instinctive, the fate of the House of Stuart had made a deeper impression on him than on any

other member of his family. Although he could not understand the "divine right" claims made by Charles I and James II, he was filled with pity and horror at the thought of the beheaded king. To him their fate seemed to carry a warning that the only sound basis of good relations between prince and people was the Bill of Rights, which had been drawn up when William III and Queen Mary ascended the throne. It was not, however, to be interpreted one-sidedly for the advantage of the king, but in an unbiassed and generous way for the mutual benefit of prince *and* people. In the opinion of the heir to the English throne, the Bill of Rights, which had established the hereditary constitutional monarchy, could not be altered even within the royal family —neither through a constitutional fiction such as that of a pretended continued illness of the Queen, nor through a palace revolution in favour of a kind of elective ruler. Should the royal family deviate from the strict succession in order to put its most capable member on the throne, then the way was paved for an elective monarchy. If it happened on only one occasion that the royal house and the Government decided who was to rule at a certain time—for instance, at the death of a king, or during any critical period—this would undoubtedly constitute a precedent for the people's representatives to be allowed to choose a king, irrespective of the direct succession.

The Prince, who took the duties of a constitutional monarch very seriously, could admit only a breach of duty on the part of the monarch (as in the case of the Stuarts) as justifying the people or the people's representatives in interfering with the succession to the throne. Surely a political genius has seldom made a greater sacrifice to his conscience and his sense of duty than the Prince of Wales, when he placed himself between his mother and the demand of an ever-widening circle that the Queen should abdicate.

The example which Prince Edward, at that time barely twenty-five years old, set his colleagues in Europe, was all the more impressive when one recalls that it was at this period of the Prussian constitutional controversy, that the old Kaiser, at the age of sixty-six, tired of the intrigues of his son and his English daughter-in-law, drew up the deed of abdication which the "man of blood and iron" had to snatch from his hand and tear to pieces. The English heir-apparent, who exchanged letters every week with his clever sister, was a direct ear- and eye-witness of the intrigues which were being woven with the Liberal Opposition in Prussia at the Court of his sister and brother-in-law. He knew that Queen Victoria encouraged her daughter to intrigue against her husband's father and against his Ministers. The "petticoats" which Bismarck fought against all his life, were represented not only by Queen Augusta and the Prussian Crown Princess, but also by the Queen of England. While mother and daughter conspired without scruple against the old Kaiser and Bismarck, every scheme to force the abdication of the mother was frustrated by the Prince's loyalty. This showed all the more his strength of character, as at that time he was on friendly terms with the two great Party leaders, Disraeli and Gladstone, who were the alternative chiefs of the English Parliament. Both of those eminent politicians would have had an easier task if, instead of Queen Victoria, her mentally impressionable son, with his super-sensitive political instincts, had been the head of the State.

The more pronounced the Prince's aversion was to seizing constitutional power through the self-isolation of his mother, the more energetic were the endeavours of the statesmen of both Parties to create for him a field of activity worthy of his position and capabilities. The Prince's wonderful gift of oratory made this task easier for them. For his first public appearances he had learnt by heart speeches prepared by

Ministers or by his secretary—and had usually stuck in the delivery of them—but from the time he was twenty-five he spoke extempore. He noted down several trains of thought which the speech must comprise, then began without having prepared a single sentence beforehand, and composed as he delivered it. The fact that he never made a single political slip during the forty years of his life as heir-apparent is one of the most interesting psychological proofs of his intense loyalty to the Constitution, and of his disapproval of any attempt to relieve him of his fetters as a powerless son of a royal house and as constitutional heir.

CHAPTER VI

# THE SHADOW OF THE CONSTITUTION

In consequence of the great and spontaneous social success of the nineteen-year-old Prince on his American tour, the English statesmen were impelled to make use of his personal abilities in handling the most difficult problem of English home politics, the Irish question. When the abdication of Queen Victoria in favour of the Prince of Wales was under discussion, Ireland was in a state of latent insurrection, kept "quiet" only by the artificial agency of military and police. To keep the movement for freedom going and to strike terror into the English Government, the Irish Americans sent conspirators, explosives and money to Ireland.

With their colonial experience, it seemed natural to the English to answer Irish Nationalism, which expressed itself in violence, with the weapon nearest to hand—repressive action. The bomb outrages of the Irish Nationalists in Dublin, London and the larger towns of England; the burning down of the Irish country seats of English nobles and the driving off and slaughtering of the cattle of Protestant farmers—who had been settled on the English-owned estates—by the Irish population, who lived in the greatest poverty under conditions scarcely fit for human beings to bear, and who considered themselves as having been driven from their land, did not leave the English Parties free to discuss a project for Irish Rome Rule. The Liberals went a little further than the Conservatives. They admitted that the native Irish population were justified in complaining of the coercive measures —cultural, economic and political—which Parliament had imposed on them. But it was another twenty years before this Party, in the year 1886, made Ireland's demand for

Home Rule its own. In the sixties of last century the Liberals still considered the chief cause of Irish dissatisfaction to be that the Irish land belonged to the English lord, who lived in London, or on his English estates, and there spent the income which he mercilessly exacted in rent from the Irish cottagers, who farmed the biggest part of his acres. A landed proprietor who was not domiciled on his property and merely let his Irish estates be administered, with unscrupulous exactions, by English agents who were not even employed at fixed rates, but were remunerated by their English masters with a percentage of the collected rents, had no interest in paying for estate improvements out of his income. He had no interest in technical methods of agriculture, in the housing of his farmers, or in identifying himself with the agricultural interests of the country. Gladstone and his friends wanted to attack this evil from two sides. They proposed agrarian legislation entitling the Government to dispossess landed proprietors who were perpetually absent, as this would make the establishment of a free Irish peasantry easier. They also intended to reorganize politically and socially the office of the English Viceroy as an inducement to the English landed proprietors in Ireland to pass at least a part of the year on their Irish estates, and to spend a considerable portion of their Irish income in Ireland.

About the middle of last century Ireland was governed by a Viceroy who changed with each Cabinet, and by a Secretary who did not belong to the Cabinet. The Viceroy of Ireland had more and more assumed the character of an English military governor. His Secretary was a member of the House of Commons, who was not even responsible to the English Parliament for the constitutional actions of the Viceroy, but merely had to give information about events in Ireland and to account for Irish administrative expenditure. For the political actions of the Viceroy the Cabinet,

which had nominated him, assumed collective responsibility, and from time to time gave him instruction as to the policy to be followed in Ireland, which instructions were, in many cases, proposed and passed without the Secretary having been consulted. This military governor was indeed, as a rule, a great English noble with political ambitions, but the peculiarity of his position, and the fact that he was only the equal of the English landed proprietors in Ireland, prevented the formation of an English Court in Dublin. The Liberals aimed at providing a more dignified position for the Viceroy of Ireland. He should be of noble birth, impartial and politically quite independent of the Cabinet. He should be appointed for a certain number of years, and as constitutional "Vice"-roy he should be advised by a Secretary of State for Ireland. The Minister for Ireland *in the English Cabinet* would alone be responsible for the actions of the Viceroy, while the Viceroy, by following the political counsel of his State Secretary, would be completely protected under the constitutional law from Irish and English public criticism. The Prince of Wales was to be appointed to this position, with the special duty of reconciling North and South Ireland, and of creating in Dublin, at the Court of the now really "royal" Viceroy, a centre for the English lords owning property in Ireland.

If one admits that the Queen was justified in her point of view that the heir to the throne, in the capacity of Governor of Canada, Australia, South Africa or India, could not remain continuously out of England, then the one and only possible field of activity within the scope of the English Constitution for the politically-minded Prince, who was incessantly begging for occupation, was the vice-royalty of Ireland. The first definite proposal was made by Disraeli, who suggested that the Prince should be sent for a few

THE IRISH "TEMPEST"

Caliban (Rory of the Hills). "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother, which thou tak'st from me."—Shakespeare.

From *Punch*, March 19, 1870

months every year to Ireland, where he could form "the centre of a social circle," as a test of his suitability for the post. The Queen replied promptly that there could be no question of such a plan, and "her assent would never be given to it." In the year 1871 Gladstone informed the Queen that he would move a resolution in Parliament, at the suggestion of the Viceroy and the Secretary for Ireland, that the position of Viceroy should be a non-political one, "with a view to this position being taken over by the heir to the throne." Furiously angry, the Queen forbade him to bring in this Bill. Ireland was not a suitable place of residence for the Prince, and she doubted his ability to fill a high State position. Although the Queen hinted that she would be glad to know that the Prince was in Ireland, away from balls and races during the London season, yet she felt that if Parliament insisted on making alterations she must propose her third son, Arthur, afterwards Duke of Connaught, for the post. The Prince tried in vain to overcome his mother's opposition. Though for twelve years the Ministers and the Prince's friends fought against her, she was in the end victorious.

The Queen had all the less cause to oppose the proposals of her Ministers to appoint the heir-apparent as Viceroy of Ireland, considering that one Government after another had, during really dangerous periods of the Anglo-Irish conflict, sent the Prince on visits to Ireland to strengthen the prestige of the kingdom. The first visit, in the year 1865, passed off without incident, and the Prince was very well received by the Irish populace. In the beginning of 1868 Irish-American desperadoes launched a series of terrible dynamite outrages on Government buildings. Representing the Queen, the Prince of Wales visited the many victims of the outrages in a London hospital, and he recorded in a letter the terrible

impression the visit made upon him. But he nevertheless declared himself willing to visit Ireland again when Disraeli suggested it. At first the Queen would not hear of her son's visit because of the dangerous conditions in the country; but Disraeli pointed out that, in two hundred years, English kings had only spent twenty-one days in Ireland altogether. This visit again passed off in comparative quiet. In the year 1871 the young couple were again despatched to Ireland; but this time the sojourn in Dublin was less peaceful. From the windows of the Viceroy's palace in Phœnix Park the royal pair witnessed a street battle between police and Irish Nationalists, who, although forbidden to hold meetings, had marched up in thousands to protest before the Prince himself against English rule. Neither did the tour through Ireland in 1885 pass off without serious incident. They saw frequent fights between anti-English demonstrators and the police, and in many places insults were hurled at the representatives of the royal house.

The refusal to make him Viceroy robbed the Prince of an opportunity to do a man's work within the limits of the Constitution, but he had, on his many visits to Ireland, shown great personal courage in the fulfilment of duties which should really have been carried out by his mother. This was not the last time he was to be drawn out by the Government from the obscurity of his constitutional position to undertake political representative duties which were vexatious, humiliating and often dangerous.

The more violent the Queen's opposition to the employment of her son in Ireland, the cleverer became the Prince and the Ministers in projecting other proposals, by which it would be possible for the heir-apparent to fill a less ostentatious office within the scope of the Constitution. Gladstone wanted to give him a place on the council of India. The Prince himself suggested to his mother that, if he was not

to leave London, he should be allowed to work regularly in the different Departments of State, so that he might at least become familiar with the administrative machinery of the country.

Generally without giving any reason, the Queen flatly refused to consider any proposal that was made.

CHAPTER VII

# THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT

## I

### DISRAELI

THE most valuable historical proof of the eminent political and psychological gifts of the heir-apparent is the close personal relationship in which he stood to those great leaders who, in unbroken succession, have decided England's political destiny. Although Disraeli, Gladstone, Chamberlain and Balfour must have been quite aware, from the Queen's attitude, of the political powerlessness of the Prince of Wales, and although her opposition to his political employment should normally have inclined them to side with her, in whom the royal power was invested, against the Prince, they always treated the heir to the throne as their equal. The intellectual significance, and the political clear-sightedness of the Prince always made them more anxious to convince him of the essential correctness of their policy than to encourage him to take for granted the decision of his mother's "great Ministers."

Of the great figures who had decided England's policy to any considerable degree since the death of Palmerston, the most highly gifted—but un-English and therefore most incalculable—was a man of Jewish-Portuguese extraction, Benjamin Disraeli. Disraeli was not only a contemporary of Lassalle's, but he was also his sociological and psychological parallel. The English Jew, of aristocratic instincts, had a craving for the approval of the members of the ruling class, whom in his heart he must have despised for their intellectual, social, and religious prejudices. Further, he had,

like the protector of Countess Hatzfeldt and the bridegroom of Helene von Dönniges, brilliant gifts as an orator and as a writer of fiction; but in the age of those masters of English, Dickens and Thackeray, and of Carlyle and Macaulay, sovereigns in the realm of historical essay writers, these gifts could only be considered as so good a second-best as to border on greatness. Like Lassalle, Disraeli was a bundle of nerves. The approval or disapproval of his contemporaries would alternately lift him to exaggerated heights, or cast him down into such depths of depression as could only be produced by an offence to his overweening vanity.

Lassalle, the Eastern Jew of Breslau, made the very best personal impression on the princely Junker, Bismarck; the Oriental Disraeli was the only Minister who succeeded in ruling the obstinate Victoria of the Guelphs with velvet gloves. Lassalle foundered through compromising with the life that was led by a class to which he wanted to belong, and which he must have despised in his heart. Disraeli was more Semitic than Lassalle and more akin to the Arab sheikh than to the denizen of the ghettos; he was also more tenacious and more cunning in the best sense of the word, and therefore he mastered the habits of the ruling class of a "young and barbarian" people, whose hollowness he exposed with all the loathing of his soul in his political novels.

Of all the English statesmen, Disraeli had the finest psychological understanding of the tragedy of the position of the most politic of English princes. Although he had a stronger influence over the Queen than any other English Prime Minister of the nineteenth century, Disraeli did least of all towards making the existence of the heir-apparent more humanly bearable.

This inactivity originated in the mutually repellent similarity of the talents of the two political geniuses, the Prince and the Jew, and in a certain femininity, which played an

important part in the character of the great Imperialist. The gifts of both the Prince of Wales and Disraeli were instinctive. They were both born to practise politics as a fine art, and as an outlet for their creative force, in the same sense that the prodigy, Wolfgang Amadeus, had been born purely for music, a hundred years before to the Salzburg organist. Prince Edward had many interests—and a great number of them of almost the same degree of intensity: gallantry, horses, sport, the people's prosperity, social splendour, perfect hospitality and an adroitness of speech and writing, not only in his own but also in foreign languages. But he had only one ardent passion which could immediately check and oust his activity in any of these spheres of interest: the longing for responsible, constructive political freedom of action. All knowledge and experience which the Prince had acquired through his hobbies were utilized as indispensable tools for his political activity. In moments of political tension, no sphere of interest could obliterate the "future King" from his consciousness, nor detract from the clearness of his political aims.

Disraeli, more feminine than the Prince, had to take many a roundabout way to make himself indispensable to a Party and a class which, though it could indeed make use of him, would never respect him. The most passionate English politician had to pose as the courtier and litterateur who, on occasion, employed his mental powers in the political field, just as a nobleman employs his physical strength at times on the hunting field.

Up to the time of the appearance of Disraeli, the aristocratic leaders of the Conservatives and Liberals had shared the government of the country among them. They had fought for power and never for position or income. A political downfall had no social significance. It meant a period of rest for the mental powers of these individuals, who had

not been brought up to do regular work, and a period of recuperation for their capital and income, on which heavy claims were made when they were in office. Disraeli was the first professional politician which the English political machine had produced since it was radicalised in 1832. During the first half of his life he was without means and always in debt. Later on he achieved a safe financial position by marrying a widow, twenty years older than himself, to whom he was bound by no love-tie. But economically and socially he remained far beneath the great English families who ruled in Party politics. In England, the country where one dare not show one's real self, Disraeli was obliged to draw a veil over this too realistic middle-class background of his social existence. He dared not appear too active or efficient, and had to conceal his ambitions for power and position. He must keep himself always under control, he must not sacrifice his energy and his position as a courtier among politicians, which he had won by clever intrigues, to a cause which was not vitally necessary for his development and career.

Disraeli shared with the revolutionary Junker Bismarck, and with Lassalle, the conviction that as far as he had gone, he could fill alone the positions which he had gained. The versatility of his character, his many specialized talents, and his vast amount of practical and psychological knowledge, deceived him into thinking that in every situation he could best help himself. He believed in the usefulness of cleverly chosen instruments, but not in the necessity of winning men of the same views, who would help him because they were utterly convinced of his mission. He had much too high an opinion of the heir to the throne to place him in the first category, apart from employing him in a representative capacity on certain occasions of political importance. He valued justly the Prince's instinctive gifts, and this prevented him from making the best use of him. Had he been able to

persuade the Queen to employ the Prince according to his talents, he would probably thereby have created his own most dangerous rival. If the mother were once convinced of the ability of her son, and of his unselfish willingness to work without threatening her position, it would have been at the expense of the politician's position as courtier, for the son would then directly have had the ear of the mother, and the responsible Ministers would have been able to reach the Queen only through the son's approval of their views.

Disraeli, who had sacrificed material well-being and physical pleasures to his dominating political ambitions, was too feminine to endanger the nest he had built for himself, by unselfishly opposing the Queen. He advocated indeed the utilizing of the Prince's gifts, but he would not have anything to do with any active struggle to secure this end. As the Prince of Wales was not absolutely necessary to him, he saw no reason for making his liberation from the guardianship of his mother and from a life of inactivity the cause of a conflict with the Queen, whom he had so cleverly won to his side. The feminine element in his nature gave him a quick perception of her moods. As he did not wish to share his influence over the Queen with anyone, he understood just as readily that she was not prepared to share her power with anyone, least of all with one of her children. So the feminine in Disraeli refused to be drawn into the son's struggle against the mother's tyrannical demands.

In support of this attitude of the statesman was undoubtedly the recognition that the similarity of his own and the Prince's positive qualities found its parallel development in their negative attributes. Disraeli and Edward laid the same stress on the importance of correct attire. They often allowed themselves to be influenced by elegance and social cleverness into an erroneous judgment of their contemporaries. They showed the same irritability at unfavourable

criticisms and opinions from outsiders, and the same sensitiveness to flattery in the form of approval of their aims, however insignificant. Disraeli was not convinced that there were any qualities in the Prince which would counterbalance these personal faults, which led him to pronounce wrong judgments on men. Even if the idea could have occurred to Disraeli—which I doubt—to seek a person who could help him and take up his political work after him, this person's outstanding qualities would have had to be of a different type from Disraeli's, so that he would have been the complement of his master.

## 2

## GLADSTONE

Gladstone's chief characteristic was a self-confidence which was never troubled by self-criticism. To the English ruling class he was just as pronounced an upstart as Disraeli, but he had also all the personal characteristics of the parvenu. He was the son of a Lancashire manufacturer, who only represented the second generation of a family which had made money enough to set the feet of their most gifted offspring on the traditional path of the English gentleman. Eton and Oxford made out of the rich, middle-class boy from the north of England first the religious bigot, then the conservative champion of the rights of property if it were ever threatened. The sterility of Conservative politics—over which his great rival had not as yet gained any decisive influence—and the prevalent propensity in the Conservative Party to identify indefensible prerogatives of the great land owners and the nobility with national interest, drove him for the protection of the foundations of his existence into the only alternative political camp then in existence, the

Liberal Party. Gladstone was just as little a Liberal in sentiment as Disraeli was a Conservative.

In the middle of the fifties of last century, when Gladstone and Disraeli were no longer forced into political positions by that element in English politics which until then had been decisive—namely, the inherited Party adherence of their families—the fundamental difference between Liberal and Conservative was not very great. A little more Free Trade or a little more Protection, entire *laissez faire* or a little solicitude for the working class for charity's sake, reform *and* repression in Ireland, or a policy of unmitigated repression without reform, were, after all, only differences of degree. Differences in views of life expressed themselves chiefly in the educational question. How slight was the significance of the dividing line in the world outlook of English politics is illustrated by the fact that Disraeli, the baptized Jew, who was by conviction a Rationalist, was the revered leader of the Conservatives, whilst the orthodox Gladstone, supporter of all the Catholic tendencies in the English High Church, could for years lead, unopposed, the Liberal Party.

Gladstone and Disraeli were different and opposite in their personalities, and not in their political and material ideas. A political satirist of those days once summed it up thus: If in any issue Disraeli puts his money on "a," Gladstone will put his on "b." They will always bet on different horses in the same race.

This characteristic of the two greatest English political figures of the second half of the nineteenth century probably determined the quiet, evolutionary uniformity of the development of England's political institutions. From the Bill of Rights of 1688 to the Reform Act of the year 1832, a change of Government between Whigs and Tories only meant a change of the ruling political families and their

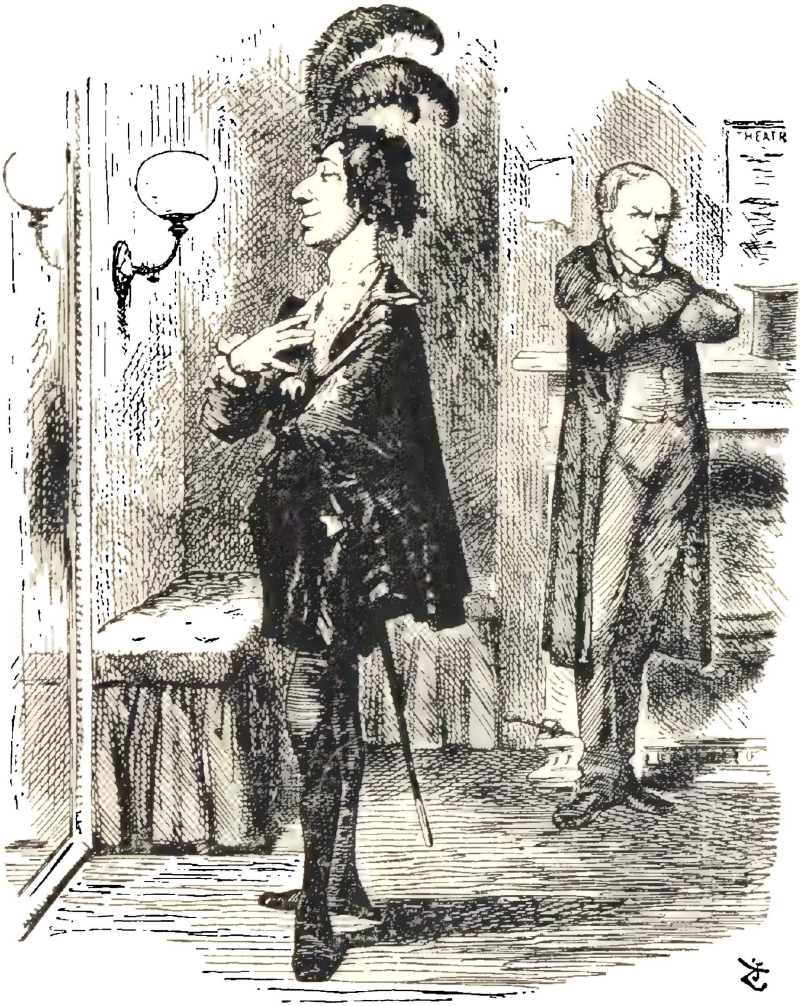
coteries. The Parties sometimes had opposite views regarding certain questions of the day, for instance, should a certain war be continued or should peace be concluded immediately. To such a question they would give a practical reply after a change of Government. The administrative system, the spirit of legislation, and domestic policy remained almost unchanged. Not until after 1832 did the question of Free Trade or Protection become acute, and then it was decided in favour of Free Trade. When the fight over the repeal of the corn duty was ended, opposition in real essentials weakened. But the personal dissimilarity of Disraeli and Gladstone manifested itself all the more clearly. When they succeeded each other in power, each strove to do everything differently from his predecessor. Although they did not bring about any revolutionary changes in the administration or in the legislation of the country, they nevertheless succeeded in producing the impression that, by a change of Government, the Opposition, which was now for the time being at the head of affairs, had an opportunity to make great and sweeping changes. The contrast in the personalities of the leaders was so great that, whenever there was a change of Government, the people imagined, to their great delight, that the pendulum of the political system swung ever wider and wider.

The contrast between the leaders showed itself most distinctly in the relations of the two Prime Ministers with the Queen and the Prince of Wales. Gladstone, a provincial, a strongly emotional man, very much master of his home, had, as the happy father of a family, no understanding of the technique whereby the half-Oriental Disraeli could handle the obstinate Queen. The leader of the Liberal Party was under the impression that his word would naturally carry the same weight at Court as his remarks, wishes, and commands were accustomed to carry in his wife's drawing-

room or in the nursery. The daughter of the Guelphs had found her male counterpart in the robust, choleric, brusque man from the North. Seldom have two people, who, because of their positions, could not avoid a certain amount of co-operation, become so easily, so meanly, and so frequently angry with each other as Gladstone with his Queen and she with her opinionated Liberal schoolmaster, who was always ready to lecture her.

If Disraeli were inclined to allow the Queen a free hand in the treatment of the Prince, then Gladstone went all the more clumsily and awkwardly to work in his attempt to smooth over, almost by force, the strained relations between mother and son. As Gladstone had undoubtedly the correct view that a personal appeal from him in favour of a change in the Prince's situation would meet with no success, whether he made it to her as Queen or as mother, he seized every opportunity his position gave him of *instructing* his monarch in the manner in which she should treat and employ her son. But here Gladstone forgot one thing: that the Queen knew very well the Constitution, in which is defined the relation between Prime Minister and Crown. She was perfectly well aware that the Prime Minister had indeed the right to *forbid* members of the royal family a public demeanour or an expression of opinions which might tend to endanger the authority and the policy of the Cabinet which was alone responsible for the government of the country; but she also knew that he had no power, so long as the reigning monarch and his family remained passive, to issue instructions as to what they *must* do. Thus, so long as the Queen forbade her son *any* political activity, she thereby ruled out automatically the Prime Minister's right to advise or veto.

When Gladstone nevertheless continued to attempt to give the Prince an opportunity to engage in some possible




RIVAL STARS

Mr. Bendizzy (Hamlet). "'To be, or not to be, that is the question':—Ahem!"

Mr. Gladstone (out of an engagement). (Aside.) "'Leading business,' forsooth! His line is 'general utility!' Is the manager mad? But no matter-rr—A time *will* come—"

From *Punch*, March 14, 1868

political activity, he did it not so much in a spirit of human friendliness as from an excusable self-interest. Gladstone had no super-sensitive instinct for the political actions of incalculable people; and to this category belong Disraeli, all foreign statesmen, and the Irish, who to Gladstone always seemed a particularly strange people.

Like Lord Grey of Fallodon, Gladstone was "all English"; that is to say, the feelings, thoughts and actions of anybody "not English," either within or without the Empire, were to him completely sealed books. But a series of bitter political experiences, heavy election defeats, and the sensational successes of his Conservative rival taught him that the Prime Minister of the British Empire must depend for his political position, not merely on the proper handling of home affairs but, to a much greater degree, upon his foresight and cleverness in dealing with questions of colonial and foreign politics.

Gladstone was not unlike Disraeli in this; he had no inclination to seek a helper who was his equal. Less self-critical than Disraeli, he thought he had found a willing tool for his policy in the isolated Prince of Wales. In contradistinction to the ethically very tolerant Disraeli, Gladstone indeed considered the heir-apparent, intellectually and politically, as highly gifted, but morally inferior and weak of character. He also thought that if, through gratitude, he could to a certain extent bind the Prince, he could continue to make use of his talents. His own strength of character and his inner consciousness of himself as a ruler, combined with the English people's aversion to "politically active" kings would, thought Gladstone, suffice to nip in the bud any attempts on the Prince's part to be more than the gifted apprentice of the Liberal prophet. With his remarkable gift of intuition, the Prince was to be the eyes and ears, in Ireland and on missions abroad, of the great rhetorician; and at

the right moment he was to draw the attention of the Liberal leader to secret surprise actions of his great Conservative opponent. The Prince was thus to be the sense-organ through which Gladstone would be able to communicate with the many unfamiliar worlds which lay beyond the range of a north-Englander, worlds from which danger constantly threatened.

At first the Prince accepted the patronage of the Liberal leader. But from his own observations he soon saw that, at the same rate as Gladstone's efforts to procure employment for him increased, his relations with Disraeli and with his mother grew worse, and the Prince became apprehensive as to the political and personal value of his relations with the Liberal statesman. The older the Prince grew, the more clearly did he see that an English policy which neglected the interests of the great Colonies would eventually have no support from the English people. The more Gladstone's "little Englandism" showed itself, the more widely separated, despite their mutual personal esteem, were the political ways of the statesman and the heir-apparent. The Prince, now too important to remain merely a passive register of impressions, tried with the greatest patience and most delicate tact to modify the political one-sidedness of the Liberal leader. He tried to imbue this obstinately domestic politician with an understanding of what must be the political reactions of his policy, a policy which was purely a provincial one, on the Colonies and on foreign countries. The more stubbornly Gladstone held to every point and comma of his policy, the greater became the disappointment and depression of the heir-apparent, who had been taught by the quick political rise of his Liberal-Imperialist friends, Joseph Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, that one can be Liberal in home politics and at the same time have an understanding of an empire's conditions of existence.

The peculiar conception which Gladstone had of the part the Prince could play within the scope of his policy had a remarkable psychological result. The Prince, who was easily won over to new ideas by the convincing arguments of a superior mind, shared with his mother the aversion of all Guelphs from personalities which, presuming on position or authority, demanded obedience. The old Gladstone, who believed himself to be always in the right, and in whom everyone, Queen, Prince and Party follower, must believe, led mother and son to agree on one point: they were equally annoyed at this attempt to establish an intellectual and political dictatorship. It was not until towards the end of his life that Gladstone—retired and almost deserted by his Party—once more came into close personal contact with the Prince, one of whose great characteristics was that he never forgot friends, especially if age or Fate had driven them into solitude.

## 3

### JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

Joseph Chamberlain emerged from the background of English home politics into the publicity of Empire politics comparatively late in life. He was fifty years old when Minister for the Colonies in Lord Salisbury's second Cabinet. The elegant, slender man, with the clear-cut profile and an orchid in the buttonhole of his smart frock coat, always seemed the embodiment of a ruling class or caste. At the turn of the century, when the Boer War was at its height, nobody would have credited this friend of Cecil Rhodes, the English Imperialist, with the reputation which he had held throughout England in the seventies of having the best chance of becoming Prime Minister of a Socialist Republic.

The celebrated Imperialist sprang from sources which as

a rule produced Liberal Free Traders. He was the son of a small manufacturer and came of a family which had made itself prominent in the English Sectarian movement. The life of a small iron master did not satisfy Chamberlain. He became leader of the Radical wing of the Liberal Party, mayor of his home town, Birmingham, and the sharpest critic of the less desirable aspects of a hereditary monarchy. Within his realm of Birmingham "King Joe," as his friends jokingly used to call him, carried out all the reforms in social and political economy which, built on the German model, were at that time known as the system of "Municipal Socialism." Birmingham was the first city in England to municipalize the tramways, gas and electricity undertakings, and the public-water supply. It was through Chamberlain that Birmingham employers, by the creation of model settlements, were able to solve, at least to some extent, the housing problem of their working classes.

In Gladstone's Liberal Cabinets, to which Chamberlain belonged, he stood for social-political activity; he was opposed to the tendency to allow the theory of "free play of economic forces" to be over-strained. At the head of eighty-five members of the House of Commons, he separated from the Liberal Party in 1886, when Gladstone supported Ireland's demand for Home Rule. He attached himself to the Conservatives under Salisbury, who adopted the name of Unionists from the time when they incorporated this large Liberal group. In Salisbury's Cabinet Chamberlain veered round. He turned his attention from home politics to Imperial and foreign affairs.

During this phase of his career he agitated incessantly for an alliance between Germany, England and the United States, and he conducted the Boer War. To the very end of his life Chamberlain regretted bitterly that the antipathy aroused in Germany to the conqueror of the Boer Republics

constituted the greatest obstacle to the materialization of his plans for an alliance. When, in the midst of his fight for Protection, he broke down in health, Chamberlain, for whom neither Party was broad enough, was on the point of splitting up the Unionist Party, created solely for him, into two wings, an agrarian Conservative Party and an Imperialist Party of Industrialists.

The Mayor of Birmingham was not only—so far as this is possible in an Englishman—the only eminent English Republican by conviction, but he was the only revolutionary among English politicians of the nineteenth century. As a member of the owning class it was possible for him with his convictions to subscribe to Henry George's principle of Land Reform. He encouraged the Australian Colonies to make every conceivable experiment in the realm of State Socialism. He wished to break with the Free Trade system, at that time almost sacred, and he discussed the possibility —considered unthinkable twenty years earlier—of an Anglo-American alliance.

The first meeting between Chamberlain and the Prince of Wales took place in the year 1874, during a visit which the latter, prompted by Disraeli, paid to Birmingham, "the stronghold of the Republicans." Not too widely separated by age, the two men were strongly attracted to each other. Chamberlain, who at that time was prepared to tread any devious path which might spare him an official declaration of adherence to the Throne or to the institution of the monarchy, after he had made the acquaintance of the Prince found it possible, at a social function, to speak some remarkably appreciative words as to the significance of the monarchy in the historical development of England.

More important than this reserve which the civic head of Birmingham put upon himself was the part which Chamberlain played in the Prince's political education. Edward

VII's strong interest in all social-political problems, his understanding of the significance of the trades union movement, his inclination to bridge over class distinctions and to seek to abolish the most glaring inequalities between rich and poor, were the results of Chamberlain's schooling and of his political and personal friendships with Sir Charles Dilke and Fawcett. Radicals with a leaning towards State Socialism, these men reconciled the Prince to two ideas which were of decisive importance for his political activity as King. Political Radicalism at home could be united with a broad, active foreign and Imperial policy which furthered the interests of the whole Empire. These Radical-Liberals shattered the Prince's idea that only a Conservative Government was capable of raising England's prestige in foreign politics without detracting from the idea of a Colonial Empire.

But Chamberlain, as a foreign politician, went further, in continually reminding, by his example, the then heir-apparent and later King, that a broad English foreign policy must be free from prejudices and antipathy to other nations. Chamberlain did not think himself above being the exponent in England of an Anglo-German agreement—at a time when his name was anathema to every member of the pan-German League. According to Chamberlain, sensitiveness in foreign policy only proved that one was following, like the Kaiser, a policy of personal fancies instead of steering a definite, plain objective course dictated by the material needs of the people. Among the great political brains who guided England's destiny during Queen Victoria's reign, Joseph Chamberlain was undoubtedly the one who, both in the political arena and outside, exercised the strongest and most unselfish influence on Edward VII.

It speaks volumes for the mutual trust of both men that King Edward, who always believed an Anglo-French Alliance to be the indispensable foundation of a permanent

European Peace, not only countenanced Chamberlain's endeavours for an agreement with Germany and America, but also seized every opportunity to support him with the same finished diplomatic and psychological skill that he used for the materialization of his own plans and hopes for an entente.

## 4

### ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

Arthur James Balfour, the Scottish nephew, pupil and private secretary of Salisbury, was already as a young man playing an important diplomatic part at the Berlin Congress in the train of Salisbury and Disraeli. He was a brilliant scholar, a metaphysician and a philosopher, and in his efforts to cultivate good relations with the heir to the throne, his philosophical works, his lectures and essays, were a handicap owing to the latter's prejudice against "book learning." The Prince disliked the positively uncanny knowledge displayed by the budding Conservative leader, but even more strong than this dislike was his temperamental objection to Balfour's exaggerated attitude of indifference, indolence and lassitude.

In order to give time to his "fruitless philosophical speculations," Balfour put aside important State business which would have necessitated the making of weighty decisions. As heir-apparent, and later when he became King, Edward was frequently made impatient and irritated by the sage who wrote a philosophical treatise on the "foundations of belief," and the cynic who did not believe in the reality of human joy and suffering.

These two characters were utterly dissimilar. In spite of his youth, Balfour had all the abstraction and asceticism of the philosopher; whereas the King, who was increasing in

girth as he increased in years, could even as an old man still laugh gaily at life, which owed him so much. Nevertheless, they worked well together. The King freed Balfour from Disraeli's prejudices against France and Russia as possible political partners of England, and Balfour, with his inexhaustible store of historical and philosophical knowledge, furnished the heir-apparent and King with a factual and intellectual foundation for what had formerly been purely instinctive opinions and aims.

The full significance of Balfour's personality in Edward VII's life and work only showed itself after 1905, when Balfour was succeeded by two mediocre Liberal Prime Ministers, Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith. The King had perforce to give the Liberal statesmen the same education in foreign policy which he had given the Conservatives, but the temperamental man now showed in his dealings with his new advisers, who in a rather fruitless opposition had not been thoroughly prepared for the office of government, that the philosopher-Prime Minister had nevertheless coloured the views of the King who could never appreciate learning and book-knowledge. Impulses had developed into convictions, and convictions had crystallized into great supernational political ideas. It was Balfour who created, not only in Edward but in the whole English royal house, the understanding that the ideas "Motherland" and "colony" must belong to the past. It was Balfour who, by appealing to the Swiss model, brought about the reorganization of the Empire into the "League of Equals" of the Imperial Conference of 1926.

The great philosopher brought first the royal house, then the English governing class, and finally his nation to the consciousness of the fact that a world-empire can rest only upon the conformity of will of the masses, and not upon the overpowering might of one—to-day perhaps the oldest, to-

morrow the youngest—member. He popularized the fundamental idea that, in an Empire which contains within it not only continents and civilizations but also the most different stages of development of social democracy, only full autonomy of geographically conditioned unities can ensure the stability of the "British Commonwealth."

At the dawn of the political consciousness of the heir-apparent stood the Liberal Imperialist, Lord Palmerston. At the end of the political career of Edward VII stood the great Social Imperialist, the philosopher of Whittinghame and the eternally young tennis-player of Cannes, Lord Balfour.

CHAPTER VIII

# SA VILLE LUMIÈRE

## I

### ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE

EDWARD VII, who was in his sixtieth year when he ascended the throne in 1901, had only once in his life been allowed to act in a responsible political capacity as the representative of his mother. In her absence he had presided at the session of the Privy Council which decided on England's neutrality in the Spanish-American War, and which had issued the necessary proclamations and instructions to the British ambassadors and to the British mercantile marine.

When the Prince of Wales succeeded his aged mother, the wide international and Court circles and the British and European publics knew him only as the amateur of beauty, the connoisseur in games of chance, the keen racehorse owner who twice led a Derby winner to the scales, and the confidant of eminent international financiers. The friend of bankers, the "super-boulevardier," and socially the most prominent representative of the royal family who "during the day tried in unceasing activity to snatch back the hours he had wasted the previous night"—thus was described the man who, prompted by honourable scruples arising from his position as a constitutional prince, denied himself the scope for the exercise of his talents. His diplomatic and political genius was wasted in struggles for the elemental right of his poorest subject, the right to work, and of these struggles the world knew nothing until after his death. Behind these clichés was hidden the foreign politician, who by the time he had reached his thirtieth year had evolved a pro-

gramme of his own for the peaceful reconstruction of the world and the assimilation of the newly emerged political and dynamic forces represented by Germany, the United States and Italy, as well as the statesman who, had it been vouchsafed to him to assume power thirty years earlier, in a country less conspicuous for its galaxy of distinguished men, such as Disraeli, Gladstone, Chamberlain, Rhodes, Curzon and Balfour, would have dominated the politics of an average Ministry within the frame-work of any constitution.

But for all this his fellow-men did not calumniate the seventh Edward. An orthodox Canon once took Rembrandt to task for leading a life which could not exactly be called puritan. The great painter's reply was: "How could I possibly be a great painter of men without at the same time being a great sinner? Our Saviour only despised the little sinners, the money changers in the outer temple; in us great sinners he also saw the sons of God."

That Edward VII managed to emerge from the neuroses and psychoses set up by his unnatural education without permanent harm to himself is a proof of the powerful influence of his Hanoverian heredity.

This heredity, which during the first phase of his reign saved him from physical destruction, is not only "the sum total of good qualities," as the theologians frequently suggest or "the secret blessing of the sorely-afflicted," as Dryander once put it; it is the composite result of impulses, psychic and physical, conscious and unconscious, repressed and exaggerated, controlled and uncontrolled, erotic and æsthetic but always instinctive.

During the Prince's youth his sometimes almost frantic resistance to the limitations of his liberty, which expressed itself in fits of rage, played a large part. By the time he was thirty he had overcome this psychosis by means of an effort

of the will resulting from an acceptance of fundamental laws. He still desired to do things, but he had ceased to butt his head against proscribed forms of activity.

There then arose the big crisis as to the form which the release of this strong man's energies should take. Having rejected the revolutionary outlet of breaking through the traditional conventions under which he laboured, and in the absence of any possibility of activity in which he could have utilized his positive constructive tendencies in a way acceptable to a man in the prime of life, the resultant excess of energy was so tremendous that it had to be expended somehow.

The Hanoverians had two tendencies which frequently have been observed to co-exist. They were not only men of strong will-power, but they were also endowed with strong and fundamentally normal erotic instincts, and they presented to the world numerous offspring, who were not always fit to live. In their sexual relationships there was very little romanticism—the purely material satisfaction of their desires was all that mattered.

When the Prince was denied the life work for which he was destined by reason of his psychic and mental equipment he fell into a state which demanded what might be called "an escape from the emptiness of life." Too healthy to fall a victim to depression, inferiority complexes and self-deprecation, he crossed the Channel to seek solace. The man who by his qualities was fitted to be the most capable and eminent constitutional King, and who succeeded during the last nine years of his life in consolidating the constitutional monarchy as the only possible form of Government for England, was compelled to create for himself when he was Prince of Wales, the position of being simply the "first gentleman in Europe." He charmed, took part in all social pleasures, and represented his royal house more perseveringly

and adroitly than any contemporary. He was determined to excel in something, even if only in outward accomplishments. Somehow and somewhere he must be King.

This enforced apparent superficialization of his aims brought him into conflict with all the prejudices and conventions of the middle-class, not only in his own country, but also in most of the central and western European countries. And it was just from this conflict, about the outcome of which he apparently never concerned himself at all, that he emerged victorious and as a pioneer in European Society, although he had probably never dreamed of such a thing during his lifetime.

The Parisian *bon viveur* fought on behalf of modern society for the right of the individual to shape his conduct according to the dictates of his personality. Edward VII has accomplished the separation of the forms of life of the masses from those of Society, and if at the present time a man's private life is regarded as his own affair, if his personal relationships have ceased to have an adverse effect on the career of a public man or the judgment passed upon him by his contemporaries, the younger generations owe a debt of gratitude to a royal son whose surplus energy drove him to live a spacious life.

King Edward VII proved to his people during the most fateful years of its history, that one can have tasted all life's pleasures without exhausting those forces which go to the making of a great and far-sighted ruler. It may be regarded as the super-national lifework of the "super-boulevardier" that he compelled men to recognize the fact that a change between life's pleasures and life's work is the right of composite personalities.

Temperamental supermen, who in the decade after the War on more than one occasion saved their countries from disaster, could not conceivably have attained their positions

in the front rank of European politics before the advent of Edward VII, who by his life had claimed for the political genius that personal liberty which for a century has so readily been conceded to the artistic genius. To have saved the world from the exclusive domination of born Philistines like Gladstone, Thiers, Loubet, Bethmann-Hollweg and Scheidemann is in itself a notable service to humanity.

The younger contemporaries of Edward, and the generations at present in the plenitude of their powers, to whom freedom from irksome restrictions on conduct appears so natural that they cannot conceive that things were ever otherwise, must not underrate, however, the afflictions under which the pioneer of new standards of conduct laboured in his heroic attempts to escape from enforced inactivity and the intellectual dullness of the virtuous. The caricaturists of all nations represented the Prince, craving for action, as the type of the *bon viveur* who indulges his proclivities and fancies to the full. His compatriots compelled him to appear in the witness box of an English Court like any common *roué* or cardsharper, and to give evidence on oath as to whether Mrs. X. had made immoral advances to him, or whether Mr. Y. had played fairly or cheated at a game of chance which took place in the Prince's presence. Britain was actuated at the time of this deposition by an indescribably narrow puritanism, and the Prince's stake was more than his personal reputation. His stake was the prestige of the monarchy, and he won because he appeared before a nation of sportsmen to give evidence in an impartial manner on actual happenings like any ordinary citizen. He won because he had the courage to stand up for his forms of enjoyment. He won because the nature of his evidence, and the circumstances of his conduct which called for it, constituted an accusation, which he had never formulated, flung at his mother and the country at large. Thus his appearance in the

witness-box marked the moral climax of a life which ostensibly was only given up to pleasure.

If Edward's mode of life during his first fifteen adult years was externally an escape from the emptiness of life, his continuance in it during the second half of his time as Prince of Wales may be regarded rather in the light of a camouflage for his participation in foreign politics. The spacious style of living, which impressed outsiders so much, was mere window-dressing to hide the services which Britain's greatest "unofficial ambassador" and "diplomatic secret agent" was allowed to render to the great ones of the earth, in whose shadow he was condemned to walk until the eve of his life. The growing generations of Young England and Young America know as little of the adventures, the emptiness of life and mortifications of Edward VII, as the hordes of American tourists who, year in year out, pass in procession by Rembrandt's "Night Watch" and Michelangelo's "Moses," know of what was in the minds of the men whose names are given on copper plates as the creators of these works of art. The British Empire in its present form, with its monarchy firmly entrenched in the public consciousness and the altogether democratic and constitutional sentiment of its royal representatives, is likewise a human work of art, which perhaps cannot be appreciated fully by the millions, but which should be rated at its true value by the countrymen of that Chancellor who always ranked politics as an art.

## 2

### THE DREAM OF THE FUTURE

The Prince's leaning towards the French was at the outset merely a matter of sentiment. As a youth and in the twenties he found across the Channel, in the "most fashionable city of the world," in which he could remain submerged for days

at a time, that freedom which his misdirected education had always denied to him. The gaiety of Parisian Society under the Third Empire formed the strongest possible contrast to the dowdy German conventionality of his parental home. The beautiful Empress Eugénie, who constantly showed her sympathy for the good-looking young English prince, was to him that elder and interesting married woman with whom probably every man in the twenties has been in love.

That the Prince's interest in the destinies of France was at first mainly sentimental is evidenced by a letter which he wrote to his mother on 21st August 1870, commenting on the French defeats at Metz and the investment of this stronghold which had just become known:

> "If only something could be done to stop this terrible war. Could not England, backed up by other neutral powers, now step in to try to induce the belligerents to come to terms, as it would yet save the lives of some thousands of fellows. I cannot bear sitting here and doing nothing while all this bloodshed is going on. How I wish you could send me with letters to the Emperor and the King of Prussia, with friendly advice, even if it ultimately failed.
>
> "I would gladly go any distance, as I cannot help feeling restless when so many one knows and likes are exposed to such danger."

The many the Prince liked were in the first place his Paris friends of the high French aristocracy and the Imperial Guard. Gladstone and the Queen declined the Prince's request, as the passage of arms had not yet progressed far enough towards a decision for proposals of intervention, tolerable for both parties, to have any chance of being accepted.

The personal relations of the Prince to Paris Court circles and fashionable society soon produced points of contact between the political genius and his kindred spirits in France.

EXCESSIVE BAIL

Justice (to Bismarck). "Your client was assaulted, and you ask that the defendant 'shall be bound over to keep the peace for many years.' But I cannot sanction a demand for exorbitant securities."

From *Punch*, February 18, 1871

The spiritual equals of the Prince, however, were not to be found in the monarchist and aristocratic circles of the Paris Faubourgs and the castles on the Loire, where the Prince liked to go to dance and to hunt. He found them among the French bourgeoisie, which with tremendous energy sought to prepare a new and glorious future for the country by way of a new form of government. Gambetta, the radical middle-class son of the French Midi, was at that time a figure of just such surpassing eminence in the French political arena as Bismarck among the German Ministers and Party leaders. Gambetta gave the following description of the Prince to Madame Adam: "The politics of Europe and the world interest him as much as they interest us. It is no waste of time to talk with him, even over a merry supper at the Café Anglais. He loves France at once *gaiment et sérieusement*, and his dream of the future is an entente with us."

In 1878 the cession of the Isle of Cyprus and the publication of a secret Anglo-Turkish agreement produced a dangerous tension in Anglo-French relations. France feared that England by devious ways was endeavouring to rob it of its position as the chief guardian power of Christianity in the East, and was prepared in order to "escape this humiliation" to make common cause with Russia. The Prince expressed his willingness to act on one of his journeys, ostensibly undertaken for pleasure, as the mediator between England and France. The outcome of his efforts is referred to in the following letter addressed to the Prince on 24th July 1878, by Lord Salisbury, the Foreign Minister in the Disraeli cabinet:

> "I trust your Royal Highness will not think I am guilty of an intrusion if I venture, on the score of my official position, to thank your Royal Highness very earnestly for what you have done in Paris. The crisis has been one of

no little delicacy: and if the leaders of French opinion had turned definitely against us, a disagreeable and even hazardous condition of estrangement between the two countries might have grown up, which would have been very much regretted. Your Royal Highness's influence over Monsieur Gambetta, and the skill with which that influence has been exerted, have averted a danger, which was not inconsiderable. It has been necessarily my duty to watch anxiously the movement of feeling in France at this moment."

With this letter ends the period wherein the Prince had been estimated by the British political leaders, a class most closely screened from the outside, as the "super-boulevardier" who did nothing but chase empty pleasure. They were by now well aware that his mother had entirely misjudged him. Salisbury's letter constitutes the deed of admission of the politician of royal blood into the ranks of the builders of Empire. Successive British Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers realized to the full the enormous advantages of the Prince's "bad reputation" as a screen for the execution of the Government's political business. Every trip the Prince made to Paris, to the Riviera, Homburg, and Vienna, always owing to the established "popular prejudice" against his merely superficial sphere of interest, was immediately connected with new adventures and sensations. When at the height of the Egyptian crisis in 1882, an Anglo-French tension sprang up which might easily have led to an Eastern war, the Prince again attempted mediation in Paris. But on this occasion he was unsuccessful. He no longer had the support of the consistent world policy of a Disraeli or Salisbury, but was faced with the task of making intelligible to the "most logical people on earth" the weak and vacillating Egyptian policy of Gladstone, which fluctuated from day to

day according to internal electoral considerations. The discontent of French public opinion with England was not in the first place directed against the responsible British Minister, but against the voluntary Ambassador Extraordinary, who was much better known on the Paris boulevards, in clubs, theatres, and on the Turf, than the crabbed figure of a Lancashire manufacturer's son. For the first time in his political career Prince Edward experienced the fickle nature of Parisian popularity when, in 1883, the British Ambassador, Lord Lyons, advised him to avoid Paris on his continental travels. The Ambassador considered it his duty thus to protect the Prince from unseemly demonstrations on the part of a Paris mob. The Prince, however, did not keep away from Paris for long. In May 1884, he had undertaken, without instructions or plenipotentiary powers, the task of bringing about a reconciliation between England and France. He visited President Grévy and discussed all outstanding Anglo-French difficulties with him. After this visit, which proved politically sterile, the Prince returned to England in a pessimistic frame of mind.

The lack of continuity in French foreign policy and the muddle of France's internal policy forced upon the calculating observer the question whether in the long run France would prove to be England's most suitable ally. And now, for the first time in the development of the political personality of Edward, there dawned a "happy hour" full of promise for the future of Germany. Sir Sidney Lee has shown that during the eighties of the last century, "the Prince was inclined to play temporarily with the fancy that Germany might prove in the long run a more trustworthy ally" for England than France. Bismarck missed his opportunity at the time under the influence of his well nigh pathological distrust of the British royal family and the husband of a Danish princess.

CHAPTER IX

# THE GERMAN COMPLEX

## I

### WEIMAR AND POTSDAM

DURING the World War a contrast between the two German symbols "Weimar" and "Potsdam" was created in the public mind of the Anglo-Saxon countries for propaganda purposes. The World War was ostensibly waged against "Potsdam" in order to free those Germans who were in the majority, and whose sentiments were expressed in the word "Weimar," from the predomination of a military caste which was half Slavonic, or at any rate of East-Elbian descent, and numerically in the minority. This convenient but purely artificial dividing-line was facilitated by ideas which first appeared at the English Court and later spread from there, chiefly through the Liberal aristocracy, to the broad mass of the English Liberals.

For the German the idea "Weimar" has only an intellectual meaning, and unites an immense amount of divergent historical and political persons and conceptions. One has only to refer to the fundamental contrasts between Schiller, the German-Nationalist professor of history, and Goethe, the cosmopolitan, and point to the psychologically impossible fifth act of William Tell and to Goethe's attitude towards Napoleon I at the Princes' Congress of Erfurt, in order to demonstrate the arbitrariness of politicalizing the idea "Weimar." Kant, the most Prussian of all philosophers, the ethical founder of the system which is commonly identified politically with the idea "Potsdam," was almost unknown in

Prussia, although the rest of Germany hailed him as their spiritual hero, on a level with Goethe.

The Prussia represented by the propaganda idea "Potsdam" was, in its political and military organization, neither the work of Prussia nor of those who had passed through the military and administrative schools of Potsdam and Berlin. That Prussia, with which the German Left made political capital before 1870 in the Paulskirchen Parliament, in the non-Prussian Press and above all in foreign countries, had already collapsed at Jena at the hands of the French National Army. As many neurotic women are robbed of their interest in life when they are rid of their troubles, so the narrow-minded political Left in Germany would have been deprived of its *raison d'être* if it had been compelled to recognize the qualities of that Prussia which the non-Prussians, Scharnhorst, Stein and Hardenburg had created in spite of the opposition of orthodox Prussianism. The rest of Germany, actuated by the spirit of the parish pump, would not "acknowledge" the energetic, well-organized, post-Napoleonic Prussia, in which efficiency was adequately valued. During the great crisis in German history before 1866 the tendency was to turn towards an enfeebled Austria, unfitted under the direction of Metternich's successors to be a rallying point for Germans until external foes, the French Emperor and an unreliable Russia, stood menacingly at the frontiers of German language and culture.

As the small court in Weimar became the centre of great German minds, it served German liberalism as a fair excuse for an argument against German concentration of power and as a demand for the autonomous development of every branch of intellectual life in Germany. Under the protection of a great Minister, the intellectual life at the Court of Weimar flourished to an unprecedented degree, so that all the German petty princes conceived the notion that their

existence as "hereditary patrons of science and art" might be justified. That the brothers Humboldt, with the aid of a powerful royal house, had already established similar centers for intellectual and research work in Prussia was "overlooked," and the development of Munich and Dresden was equally ignored.

When Prince Consort Albert married the Queen of England, he was under the influence of such small Court traditions, which had no connection whatever with the real Germany and its technical and industrial developments. The Thuringian Prince considered spiritual liberty and the provision of creative opportunities for artists, poets, and savants as the enlightened acts of grace of rulers who are truly great, however small may be their realm. He held the opinion that a concentration of power in the hands of one ruling house and one German state was treachery to the princely traditions of the house to which he belonged. A prince should not only be the Mæcenas of art and culture, but also be versatile enough to be their accomplished exponent. It was the duty of a prince and his offspring to be at once scholarly and versed in art and music. According to the Prince Consort the best thing in Germany was the duty which honour imposed upon its princes to learn and to know much. He therefore tried to make of his eldest son—by means of a forcing-house education—a universalist, and a cross between Goethe and the two brothers Humboldt.

The Prince, born of a house whose worldly tendencies were stronger than their spiritual ones, and endowed with strong volitional impulses, reacted to these educational attempts by a healthy and entirely comprehensible repugnance to the "pure intellectuality" in that version of German culture with which he was brought in contact. It was never possible for him to appreciate the great minds of Weimar, who had only furnished the material for the mechanical memoriz-

ing imposed on him. They were the inspirers of his ill-contrived education; they were the ideal shining lights to his father, who never found any method of approach to his son's affections.

Like Frederick the Great, who as Crown Prince escaped from the stifling atmosphere of the Potsdam drills, from the Gerhardt brand of Christianity, and from the tyranny of his father's council chamber, into a world of rococo, of the art of Pesne and the works of Voltaire and Diderot, so the English Prince rejected German classicism, which had reached him only in a superficial form, and sought refuge in French society, living under the influence of and reacting to writers like Maupassant, Flaubert, Scribe, Victor Hugo, Anatole France and Zola, whose charm and sparkle made a much stronger appeal to his mind. Here he found a living connexion between great intellects and their bourgeois and aristocratic contemporaries. These Frenchmen were not afraid to take their places in the struggle for the right to express their views both in speech and in writing. They came of a race whose mental vivacity and power of expression prevented it from allowing the achievements of the intellect to petrify, or to lower them to the status of a branch of instruction. Edward VII carried into adult life no more live conception of the values for which Weimar stood than the many thousands of sixth-form school-boys whose teacher of German was a narrow-minded bungler, and who in after life could only connect Goethe and Schiller with muddled literature lessons and impossible themes for essays.

It was a misfortune both for Germany and for Edward that his upbringing and home life made him hate not only the intellectual but also the technical, political, and military achievements of the German nation. For him Prussia and Potsdam after 1848 were as much a sealed book as was the Weimar of the intellectual giants. If he associated with

the term "Weimar" only a weary stage of his struggle for the integrity of his individuality, something corresponding to a sleeve of his mental strait-jacket, then post-revolutionary Prussia was to him only a symbol to which the blame must be attached whenever Queen Victoria's eldest daughter was dissatisfied with her fate as Crown Princess or with her family life—contingencies for which, it must be said, she generally bore a fair share of responsibility. The learned father's learned daughter would see in the new Prussia only a break with the liberal and intellectual traditions of the smaller German Courts which she held in reverence. The Princess, who was by no means devoid of political acumen, could not have failed to recognize that Prussia could carry out its historic mission in Germany only by concentrating its power, and thus limiting and finally eliminating the existing system by which power was dissipated. This logical root of Prussia's mission was perverted by the Princess in her private intercourse with English relatives into an indictment, with intellectual and ethical embellishments, against the "unspiritual" thirst for power and land of a Prussian military caste. She managed to get this picture of Prussia accepted not only by her English relatives, but also by her German husband. On the constitutional issues of 1863, on the army question and, what was particularly disastrous from the point of view of foreign policy, on the struggle round the Elbe duchies, the Prussian Crown Prince passed as an opponent of Bismarck's policy. In the private correspondence of the British royal family, Bismarck was decried as the systematic oppressor of all liberal movements in Germany, as the diplomatic intriguer whose only care was to hatch Prussian schemes of conquest, and finally as the personage whose aim it was to deprive the Crown Prince, the Crown Princess, and their numerous liberal friends of all political influence. Bismarck soon attained to the rôle of bogey-man in the correspondence

between Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess of Prussia, a part which Napoleon I had played in British public consciousness at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Queen of England, who in her own home circle demanded the strictest observance of her constitutional rights, encouraged the Crown Princess to become the centre of a faction in Prussia against the father of her husband and his advisers—Bismarck, Moltke, and Roon. In the correspondence between mother and daughter, which did not fail to reach the eyes of Prince Edward, as well as in that between Edward and his sister, the idea played a great part of how everything in Prussian Germany would change in favour of liberalism and a moderate militarism as soon as the moribund old Kaiser should die and the Crown Prince, who was entirely under the domination of his wife, should ascend the throne.

In the correspondence of the Crown Princess of Prussia with her British relatives the purely fictitious conception had taken root of that "other Germany," to which the Allies again and again addressed their appeal during the war. The dividing line drawn in foreign countries between the German governmental machine and the "educated, industrious German people," is an arbitrary invention of the Crown Princess Victoria, the later Empress Frederick.

Bismarck reacted to the conscious misrepresentation of his life-work with a hatred of his opponent which often blinded him to other considerations. He aimed at creating a Germany in which all classes could make their voices heard in a freely elected Parliament, and when the Reichstag of the North-German Confederation was set up, it was based on the most widely conceived and most liberal franchise of all European parliaments. From 1867 to 1887 it never had a reactionary majority. In spite of this, the Crown Princess, deliberately and against her better knowledge, maintained

that Bismarck was creating a servile state. That Bismarck's work could be misused by his successors to cover the personal politics of a weak and neurasthenic ruler was not due to the nature of the constitutional provisions. It was facilitated by the fear of just that middle-class liberalism—which the Crown Princess, during the years of its numerical ascendancy in the German Parliament, had always protected and supported—of making a reality of the Reichstag, with its ministerial responsibility and Budget control. The idols of the National Verein and the Berlin prophets of radicalism substituted for political activity a tenderly cherished hope of the dawn of "another Germany" after the death of the old Kaiser and the removal of Bismarck. These heroes of inaction, who shunned the work required for the political education of the German people towards self-government, and who prated of the "paulskirche" tradition from morning to night, but in whom was no consciousness that traditions generally make it incumbent on their supporters to live up to them, merely confined themselves to a cowardly waiting for the Great Reaper's scythe, and for the exercise of his princely right by Frederick III "to choose for himself more liberal advisers than Bismarck."

This cautious, almost cowardly attitude on the part of the parliamentary representatives of the middle classes of "the most cultured people in the world" had its roots in the instinctive. They knew perfectly well that, although they might be able to overthrow Bismarck temporarily, they would be unable to remove him permanently from power whilst the old Kaiser was alive. They also realized that they would not be able to offer a substitute, which could appeal to the mass-imagination of the German nation, for Bismarck's great objectives in external policy and his internal consolidation of the Empire. Moreover, the man who had taken the lead in the nationalization of railways and water-

ways, the extension of the financial authority of the Reich, the abolition of the military conventions and, during the last decade of his period of office, the acquisition of colonies, could hardly be branded as a reactionary or as the representative of a militarist Prussia threatening Germany's growth, in spite of the frequently self-glorifying manner of a tired and rather sick man.

When the growth of the parliamentary and economic institutions of the Reich followed an unexpectedly progressive course, the attack on Bismarck, dictated as it was by the pettiest internal motives, had to be given a new justification, if only for the benefit of foreign countries. The Chancellor of a Reichstag elected on universal suffrage could not convincingly be stigmatized as a dictator. The ecclesiastical struggle and the strong measures adopted against revolutionary activities during the infancy of European Socialism supplied welcome material for new rumours. Bismarck, "the enemy of religious liberty," and the man who made convictions and beliefs punishable as crimes, took the place of the anti-Parliamentarian "man of blood and iron." Like many men whom age embitters, Bismarck gave countenance to such legends by displaying a nervously overwrought manner towards his political opponents, but he caused no permanent damage by restricting international influences working in the Centre Party and the Socialist movement in Germany.

In Germany's hour of fate during the winter of 1918-19, when she was faced with the choice between becoming a social-democratic or a soviet republic, the "international parties of internal enemies of the State," who had become increasingly German in feeling, saved Bismarck's work. Save for a few unimportant corrections, and the change in the character of the head of the State, they passed it on intact to the post-war generations. One of these minor corrections in the constitution of the new democratic Republic makes it

easier for a cultural minority to force a denominational policy on the whole of the German people than it was under the constitution of the North-German Confederation, or under the constitution which Bismarck drew up for the German Empire. What part names have played in the history of the German nation, and how much irony is hidden behind symbols which have become meaningless, is proved by the Weimar constitution. It was ostensibly born of the spirit of those in harmony with the intellectual giants, but in its application to educational administration it surrenders every village school to the tender mercies of the Vicar or "Ecclesiastical School-Inspector," who may use it as a religious and mental drill ground for a Potsdam Wachtparade."

## 2

### BISMARCK AND THE PRINCE

Like Edward VII, Bismarck had the knack of turning political opponents or antagonists, whose opposition was based rather on opportunism than on principles, into supporters or neutrals by the exercise of his frankness and personal charm. In his dealings with Alexander II, Napoleon III, Gambetta, and other French statesmen, Bismarck was eminently successful in achieving this purpose; but with regard to two men, Windthorst and the English heir-apparent, he failed. When he came to an understanding with the leader of the Centre Party, the only personage in the German Reichstag on his own intellectual level, Bismarck was already a stricken man. On the various occasions when Prince Edward and Bismarck met—mostly on the initiative of the English heir-apparent—the physical proximity of the anti-Bismarck group in the Crown Prince's Palace hindered a convincing exposition of Bismarck's policy. Bismarck's legit-

imate suspicion of the intrigues against him, which Queen Victoria and the Prussian Crown Princess were continually instigating, increased his mistrust of the British royal house until it became a persecution mania. Each time the British heir-apparent came to Berlin, Bismarck suspected that the visit was in response to a distress-signal from the Crown Princess, who had called on her brother's superior address and intelligence for the execution of some "plot" against the Chancellor requiring particular care. The English heir-apparent was always described to Bismarck by the subsequent William II, through the medium of evilly disposed tales, as the instigator of anti-Bismarck intrigues.

The Chancellor's hatred of the sister and mother had completely warped his judgment of the Prince of Wales, whose mental constitution was entirely different from theirs. Bismarck believed that behind the scenes the English heir-apparent was in complete personal and intellectual accord with the activities and attacks of his mother and sister, and it remained hidden from the Iron Chancellor until the day of his death that, both by upbringing and temperament, Edward, in his dealings with his mother and sister, was almost irresistibly driven to "back the other horse."

Bismarck was too big a man to assume a petty and seemingly disingenuous attitude towards the Prince solely because his personal sympathies were more French than German. The Chancellor who used to treat his friends *en canaille* and his bitterest opponents, so long as he conceded them a status, with the most exquisite tact and address, was not to be determined in his attitude by the Prince's political preferences and views; he was actuated by the results of his personal experiences with Prince Edward's mother and sister.

In his conversations with the English heir-apparent the aging Chancellor never attempted to resist the Prince's charm of manner and alertness of mind, but in spite of this he

always found it impossible to speak to him without reserve. The Prince, constantly stirred up against the Chancellor by his mother and sister, came away from each interview with the perfectly correct impression that Bismarck had not told him the full truth, and that he either refused to take him seriously as a politician, or else mistrusted him. As all his political successes were achieved by the creation of an atmosphere of trust, and the most unreserved exchange of confidences, the Prince, although not naturally suspicious, was confirmed in his distrust of the ultimate aims of the Chancellor by every conversation he had with him.

It is tragic to learn how the Chancellor was afraid to speak out frankly, because he believed that to take the Prince into his confidence would be tantamount to putting his cards on the table in front of the Crown Princess, whom he considered more dangerous than anyone else, and how Edward VII, the keen student of human nature, played the whole gamut of his personal attractions to induce the only great contemporary statesman besides Gambetta who had aroused his lively interest, to establish a closer human contact with him. While Bismarck, doubtless for political reasons, which the attitude adopted by the Crown Princess entirely justified, rang down the iron curtain on the considerations underlying his policy at the psychological moment of each conversation, the Prince, as "the first gentleman of Europe," was unable to put on the table the only card which might have won him his game with Bismarck; he could not expose the two royal ladies by frankly explaining that he was different from and not to be identified with them.

Bismarck did not underrate the capabilities of the English heir-apparent, and he showed in an unmistakable way that the unsatisfactory results of his personal encounters with the Prince preyed on his mind when he not only advised his son, Prince Herbert Bismarck, on his repeated trips to Eng-

land in the eighties, to establish close connection with the Prince's political friends, and above all with Lord Rosebery, the subsequent Prime Minister, but also encouraged him to become as friendly as possible with the Prince himself. But Herbert Bismarck had certain qualities which, though they had nothing to do with politics, prevented the two men from attaining friendly terms. He was too reserved and, moreover, he committed the tactical error of "checking" with the latter's political opponents, in far too public a manner, political communications made to him by the Prince. This mistrust was not so much due to paternal warnings as to the insinuations of Prince William of Prussia, who was devoid of clan-feeling and who had tried to make himself popular with the Bismarcks by retailing unverified gossip about his uncle and his "affairs."

Towards the end of his period of office Bismarck abandoned all attempts to enter into a closer and politically more fruitful relationship with the English heir-apparent, while Edward resigned himself to the hope that, after the death of the old Kaiser, his brother-in-law would appoint a Chancellor "with whom one might at least speak openly."

## CHAPTER X

# THE RUSSIAN PERIL

EDWARD VII once told a Dutch diplomat that historical, geographical and political exigencies necessitated that Britain and Germany should enter into a "marriage of convenience with the 'Russian Colossus.'" As in the case of all unions in which both sides are very strong, such a marriage would raise difficult problems of behaviour. The balance of power being fairly evenly distributed, each partner would have to watch very carefully that the other did not overstep the border line and secure some advantage in status and individual prominence; but the many disputes and estrangements arising in a political marriage of convenience between equals would not lead to irreparable ruptures, as the purpose of the union would be of greater importance to the Parties than its emotional side.

While Prince Edward's partiality for Anglo-French friendship was founded both on reason and sentiment, and his estimate of Anglo-German relations was predominantly opportunist—according to the shiftings of the balance of power among the great Powers in Europe—his desire to arrive at an understanding with Russia was a purely rational corner-stone of his political system. Already after the Crimean war, and still more after his great Indian tour of 1875–76, he had come to the conclusion that British politicians would have to uproot the traditional but unfounded popular notion which saw in Russia only the "hereditary enemy" of Britain.

A true disciple of Palmerston and Canning, Prince Edward had always identified himself with the political axiom that the strength of the ties which united Britain with the

self-governing Colonies was determined by Britain's capacity for effective political action. His demand that Britain must have a live and clearly defined foreign policy—a desideratum which was neglected by Grey, to the detriment of the Empire, after the King's death—could only be fulfilled on condition that Anglo-Russian relations were straightened out. During the three decades of his heir-apparency, Edward had again and again observed that, because of the open British flank in India, the force and effectiveness of an active British foreign policy was absolutely dependent upon the tenor of Anglo-Russian relations. It had become clear to him that the better Britain's relations were with Russia, the more impressive was her voice in the European concert. The other European powers were quick to seize any possible advantage when, through the overlapping of the imperialistic interests of the two Powers in Asia, and especially in Persia, Anglo-Russian relations were strained.

Viewed from Prince Edward's standpoint, the policies of the great European powers towards Britain might almost be divided into two categories: periods in which Anglo-Russian peace hung in the balance, and others less favourable for the other European governments when Anglo-Russian relations were more conciliatory and an adjustment of mutually antagonistic interests could be effected.

If one concedes to the *Diplomat*-King, whose dislike of war was genuine and deep-seated, the moral premise that his political system was founded upon the desire to ensure, if possible for decades ahead, the peaceful development of the British Empire—and one must do this until the contrary has been proved—then it becomes self-evident that the internal logic of his system forced him to prepare that marriage of convenience with Russia, which was finally consummated in Reval and for which he had worked on many occasions during the past few decades, and that he was not actuated

by any desire for the encirclement of Germany. And thus starting from the Russian peril we arrive at the foundation of the political system evolved by the British diplomat of royal blood. It was his object to secure peace for the British Empire—not the peace of the graveyard, but a peace enabling the Empire, without incurring the risk of war, to round off and secure its political frontiers, put its lines of communication in Egypt and on the Suez Canal in condition to resist attack, and safeguard the economic conditions essential to its continued existence. When Prince Edward began to take an active interest in politics—which was about the time of the Prusso-Danish war—the imperialism of Alexander II and Napoleon III was imperilling the British system, which had not yet fully settled itself. British and French interests were overlapping in the Near East, in Egypt, in Constantinople, in the Iberian Peninsula, and in Siam. Russia was advancing from the Caspian Sea towards the North-West frontier of India and, with the object of establishing herself on the Mediterranean, from Odessa to Constantinople. The Suez Canal had transferred the British Empire's main line of communication from the Cape-Seychelles route to the eastern Mediterranean. France had its grip on the entrance to the Suez Canal from both sides, because, apart from its foothold in Syria, Egypt at that time, about 1870, was still a common sphere of interest to France and England, while in the western Mediterranean France had established herself in Algeria, and could at any time threaten Gibraltar through an impotent Spain. British opposition at the Berlin Congress to Russia's demand for a Mediterranean port, either on its own territory or on that of a Slav protectorate state, was a safeguard against the dangerous possibility of having to defend simultaneously India against a Russian attack from the north, and the lines of communication to India against a Franco-Russian combination.

The Entente with France and Russia, which was created in the reign of Edward VII, was therefore already traced out as a strategic measure of defence of the British Empire at a time—and this is of decisive importance for an understanding of the underlying causes of the World War—when the German Empire had only just been through its baptismal rites and no fundamental Anglo-German conflict of interests existed. British military literature and the despatches of British strategists and diplomats, from 1860 to 1880, prove conclusively that, judged from the purely British point of view, the problem of defending India along two fronts in Afghanistan and on the Suez Canal, appeared almost impossible of solution so long as the largest part of the British Fleet had to be concentrated in the Channel and the North Sea to protect the Motherland against French attacks.

France's defeat in the Franco-German War in 1870, and the developing Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans, brought Britain some temporary relief from the insistence of her problem of Empire defence from the purely tactical point of view. This ephemeral phase of the inter-action of European powers had the further result, likewise only temporary, of arraying the Prince against the official British European policy. While the Prince was prepared to undertake at any time important diplomatic missions and to use his personal influence in order to disentangle mismanaged situations, or to dispel bad feelings aroused in foreign countries, the official attitude was that it was possible to evade a final solution of these fundamental problems of Empire security. To the British Ministers, Russian Czarist absolutism appeared so far removed from France, the radical Republic, that the possibility of a combination of both countries against Britain receded into the realm of improbabilities. The Prince, unlike Gladstone, Disraeli, and Salisbury, had always opposed the inveterate diplomatic tradition of Brit-

ain, which had depended upon differences between Continental States to furnish a pretext for evading any positive solution of British problems of defence. The Prince of Wales, judging matters more impartially than the British Ministers, did not believe that in the long run a difference in the form of government could keep countries apart if their interests coincided. He was too wise to build his country's policy on the assumption that there would always be insoluble quarrels between third parties. In opposition to most British politicians, he believed in the following diplomatic postulates:

1. The quickest way of disposing of all ill-feeling in the relations of two countries is a common hatred of a third party.
2. A country can best secure itself against a dangerous emergency by direct negotiations for an understanding with those of its neighbours who may be strong enough to embarrass it in the course of diplomatic actions, by menacing it directly or indirectly.

From the Prince's general attitude in these matters it follows clearly that, after the Franco-German rivalry had been fought out, Germany for a time must have seemed to him a negligible quantity. According to the Prince's thesis, Britain would have to be so friendly with France that a Franco-Russian alliance could not be entered into without Britain's knowledge and assent. Moreover, in order to prevent such an alliance from being directed at any point against England, it was imperative that Anglo-Russian relations should be purged of any problems which might cause Russia to seek the aid of potential opponents of Britain.

The positive trend of the Prince's political consciousness, which was very marked in all his letters and utterances after the Prusso-Danish war, makes it quite intelligible, in view

of the position Prussia occupied in foreign politics before 1870, that Germany as a factor in world politics was left almost entirely out of account. Up to the time of the Berlin Congress, Britain included the Franco-German antagonism as a small item on the credit side, but it never reckoned with Germany as a power of importance in world politics. It was only after the Berlin Congress, when France and Russia had shown themselves very unfriendly to Britain, and when British diplomacy could not take the direct route to Paris and St. Petersburg, that Germany, which owing to Bismarck's personality, was gradually advancing into the political foreground, entered effectively into the calculations of British statesmen. Bismarck, who was very sensitive to Britain's "need" to guard its rear, therefore proposed in 1879, through the German Ambassador in London, Count Munster, that Britain should enter the Austro-German combination. That Britain declined on this occasion was partly due to the Crown Princess Victoria's venomous incitements against Bismarck's policy, partly also to the emphatic stand made by Edward against a British policy which again was based only on the negative element of the exploitation of continental antagonisms.

BOOK II

# THE ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY

# SAFEGUARDING GOVERNMENT BY PARLIAMENT

THE year 1880 put the loyalty of the Prince of Wales to an almost superhuman test. Disraeli (who in the meantime had been created Lord Beaconsfield) had during his long period of office (1874–1880), become not only the recognized favourite of the Queen, but almost a Court institution. In her intercourse with this skilful courtier, Queen Victoria had forgotten all her unpleasant experiences with his predecessor, the less considerate Gladstone. There were no struggles for power between the intellectually superior Jew and his Queen. Governing had again become a pleasant pastime for her since she was no longer obliged to have daily intellectual skirmishes with Gladstone, who was inclined to cling rather narrow-mindedly to the rights, within the Constitution, of Party and Parliament.

Before the Great War, the English Parliament had a natural duration of seven years. But smart parliamentary Party leaders and Prime Ministers were in the habit of dissolving Parliament about a year before its "natural life" terminated, at a moment tactically favourable to their Party. In the spring of 1880, a year before his Parliament should have dissolved, Disraeli considered the time suitable for a General Election. But he misjudged the feeling of the people. Gladstone, who in his famous Midlothian campaign had most skilfully exploited the failure of the Berlin Congress to give adequate protection to the Christian population in Turkey, won a great Liberal victory over both Conservatives and Irish Nationalists.

According to the unwritten tradition of the English parliamentary system, the Queen, after the resignation of Dis-

raeli, should have summoned Gladstone and entrusted him with the formation of a new Ministry. But her hatred of Gladstone was so intense that she tried to take advantage of two legal formalities in order to keep him out of a Cabinet which must of necessity be a Liberal one. Partly for reasons of health, partly in order to have more time for electioneering, Gladstone had transferred the leadership of his Party in the House of Commons to his colleague, Lord Hartington; but, as he played the leading rôle in the Midlothian campaign, it was evident that he retained the leadership of the Party in the country.

Against the advice of her Court officials and the heir to the throne, the Queen refused to summon Gladstone. She referred to her right as sovereign to empower any person agreeable to herself to form the Cabinet, provided he belonged to the political Party with the majority in the House of Commons. To the objection that it would be no use excluding from a Cabinet the strongest personality in the Party concerned, the Queen had the artful legal answer ready that, from the point of view of the Crown, only one person in each Party could be considered as adviser, and that was the leader of the Party in the House of Commons. The Queen's decision was in this case certainly wrong, for the old Parliament, in which Gladstone had relinquished the Party leadership, had been dissolved and the new House had not yet met, so there was no indication as to who would be chosen as leader of the Liberal Party.

The Prince of Wales agreed with neither the Irish policy nor the foreign policy which Gladstone had announced in his election campaign. To create a situation which could have ended, after much disagreeable internal confusion, only with the abdication of the Queen, it would therefore have been necessary only for him to support his mother in her objection to summoning Gladstone.

From the 18th to the 22nd of April 1880, the balance of power between Parliament and the Crown was at stake. The Queen declared that among the Liberals she would entrust only Lord Hartington, or the leader of the Liberal party in the House of Lords, Lord Granville, with the formation of a Cabinet. In her opposition to Gladstone's appointment she was supported in a most irresponsible manner by her youngest son, Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany. The Prince of Wales foresaw for his mother a humiliating debacle.

As the tension between mother and son had again reached a crisis, the heir-apparent was not able personally to explain his point of view to her. He was obliged to address the Queen in writing, through her private secretary. In one of these letters the Prince expresses his opinion that the Queen is mistaken if she regards Gladstone as an enemy and a monster, incapable of being either civil or loyal. The Prince's attitude is best illustrated by a letter from his private secretary to the Liberal leader, Lord Granville, in which he says:

> "The Prince of Wales feels sure, that if the Queen would only look upon Mr. Gladstone as a friend instead of as the enemy of Her Majesty and the royal family, which Prince Leopold deliberately delights in persuading her he is, she will find him all she could wish."

The Prince-Diplomat, who had here the most favourable opportunity to declare for the constitution, against his mother and his ambitious younger brother, was more concerned for the dignity of the Crown, which he would one day wear, than in skilfully expediting his own accession to the throne. The Prince utilized his personal friendship with Hartington and Granville, two men better known for their charm of manner than for their strength of character, to convince them of the necessity of disobeying the wishes of the Queen; they must refrain from making any undignified

attempt at forming a Cabinet without Gladstone, for without him it was predestined to failure.

If there is one document more than another in English history which shows Edward's political greatness, manly strength of character and loyalty as a son, it is the Prince's note to his mother which, it is alleged, was scribbled almost illegibly in pencil, after he had been trying, in all-night conferences with Hartington and Granville, to prevent her from committing unconstitutional acts in the style of the Stuarts. The Prince wrote to the Queen's private secretary that he had convinced himself, in conference with Hartington and Granville, that a continuation of the Queen's opposition to the appointment of Gladstone could result only in a hopeless confusion of home affairs, and that both Hartington and Granville were now of the opinion that the summoning of Gladstone was the best solution. The letter from the Prince, who had no approach to his mother, then continues:

"It would get over many difficulties, make the Queen most popular, and a stronger Government would be formed than the one Hartington would have to constitute, as the latter fears he could not form one that would last. H. saw Mr. G. yesterday, and he told me that nothing could be nicer than the way the latter spoke of the Queen —how much he felt for her in the difficult position she was placed in, and having to part with her present Ministers, in whom she had so much confidence. From what H. told me, Mr. G. will, I am sure, do all he can to meet the Queen's wishes and be conciliatory in every possible way . . . Depend upon it, it is a matter of the gravest import whom the Queen sends for to form a Government, and from what I hear I am strongly of the opinion that the Queen should send for Mr. Gladstone. Far better

that she should take the initiative than that it should be forced upon her."

The disinterested advice of her eldest son did not convince the Queen. On the 21st April 1880, she summoned Lord Hartington and requested him to form a Cabinet. Hartington kept his promise to the Prince and declined. At his suggestion a joint conference between the Queen, Granville and himself took place on the 22nd of April. Not until the Queen had been convinced during the course of this conference, that the two Liberal leaders—the only possible ones besides Gladstone—were not to be persuaded to change their views, did she "very unwillingly" consent to summon Gladstone immediately and entrust him with the formation of a Cabinet. By retiring voluntarily into the shadow of the constitution the Prince, to outward appearance, had saved the prestige of the Crown.

Gladstone's five years of office were a martyrdom for him. The Queen revenged herself in every possible way on this Prime Minister who had been forced upon her. Gladstone, a convinced monarchist, made every attempt possible, compatible with his personal dignity, to reconcile the Queen with the Party changes in the parliamentary system. His efforts were in vain. From year to year the relations between the Queen and the Prime Minister became more unfriendly. In Gladstone's diary there is a very pathetic entry. When commanded to Windsor it was his custom to be on the beautiful terrace at dawn to watch the sun rise. At his feet lay his old school, Eton, still fast asleep. Memories of a carefree childhood made the old man, grown a-weary of his constant petty bickerings with the vindictive Queen, wish that he could exchange his present powerful position, with the unpleasant aspects of which he had become only too familiar, for the happy days of childhood.

CHAPTER II

## THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CZAR

ALTHOUGH the Prince had worked so vigorously for the nomination of Gladstone and was on friendly terms with him, the two men held widely divergent views on tactics in regard to the handling of the Near Eastern question and of Anglo-Russian relations. The Prince believed that an agreement with Russia, for which he had striven since the early sixties, could not be attained on terms acceptable to England immediately after the Berlin Congress. As a means of diverting attention from the internal disintegration of Russia, Alexander II's imperialistic tendencies had been developed, but, in the Prince's opinion, the Berlin Congress had checked the Russian thrust only in the direction of the Mediterranean. The Berlin Congress was consequently only a partial solution of the general Anglo-Russian complex, a partial solution which bore a strong resemblance merely to an armistice, each side continuing to hold its own fortified lines.

In contradistinction to Gladstone, the Prince did not believe that the aspirations of Russian Nationalism would be restrained in consequence of the Berlin Congress. He knew better than most of his countrymen the history of Russia during the past two centuries, and in his opinion Russian Nationalism would find an outlet in a new direction. Its objectives would be transferred to Central Asia and Persia. At the same time there would be some diplomatic sideplay aiming at the political and military penetration of the Balkan States, which would be furnished with Russian arms and instructors against the Sultan. England's duty would therefore be to see that the conditions of the Berlin agreement

were faithfully carried out in the Balkans, while English policy in India must be on the lookout for a Russian policy of expansion in Central Asia. The sharp surveillance of foreigners in Russia and the want of telegraphic communication in the hinterland of the Caspian ports, together with warlike complications between England and Afghanistan, made it very difficult to keep a continuous watch and rapidly report on Russian "exploring" and military expeditions east of the Urals and the Caspian Sea.

The Prince believed that a comprehensive and practical understanding with Russia could be attained only after, and not before, England had expressed itself plainly as to the boundary-line of Asiatic interests. Gladstone, who did not quite believe in the Prince's warning of a possible Russian thrust in Central Asia, wanted to take the first opportunity to come to an arrangement with Russia. The first of these opportunities after the change of government in England was the murder of Czar Alexander II, who had been denounced as particularly anti-English and imperialistic. His son, Alexander III, was looked upon merely as a bourgeois of very limited political ambition, who, because his strong-willed wife, the Czarina Marie, was a sister of the Princess of Wales, would be the more easily influenced in favour of the English policy. Before and after the Berlin Congress the English Government had been unfortunate in its permanent diplomatic representatives at the Russian Court. It was only shortly before the attempt on the life of Alexander II that they had discovered in Lord Dufferin a diplomat of the first rank for the St. Petersburg post, and the heir-apparent was asked to pave the way for a policy of rapprochement between England and Russia.

While the Queen and the Court hesitated about sending the young couple to the funeral of the murdered Czar—for it was rumoured that international Anarchism, under the

cloak of Russian Nihilism directed purely against Russian politicians, meant to take advantage of the mourning ceremonies to make a "clean sweep" of European Crown Princes —the Prince was quite ready immediately to undertake the journey. The English Ambassador in St. Petersburg and the Foreign Minister, Lord Granville, considered the Prince's visit to be the indispensable condition of an Anglo-Russian understanding. When the Queen gave her consent to the journey, she wrote to the poor Ambassador in St. Petersburg that she would hold him personally responsible for "every unpleasant incident" during her son's sojourn in Russia. On the eve of his departure, Granville, in the name of the Cabinet, gave the Prince the following instructions: "I have no doubt that Your Royal Highness's visit will be productive of good. There can be no question that a good understanding and friendly relations between this country and Russia may be of immense advantage to both, while the hostility which is recommended by many good friends abroad can only be the cause of great evil. . . . The best course appears to be to be frank, not to make undue concessions, but to avoid all unnecessary complaints and petty acts of ill-will."

The Prince had a broader conception of the aims of his mission than had those Liberals who had charged him with it. He asked the Queen's permission to present the Order of the Garter to the new Czar immediately after the latter's ascent to the throne, thereby giving outward expression to the English desire to establish the most pleasant personal relations between the Courts. From the political point of view he meant the object of his journey to be something more than mere non-committal conversations with the Czar. The Prince took the opportunity to examine the political conditions in Russia, and immediately came to the conclusion (in 1881) that only a democratic Constitution and administrative reform could ensure the continuance of the Ro-

manoff rule. The Czar proved himself extremely reticent in political conversations with the English heir-apparent. Neither with regard to home politics nor his foreign political aims would he speak with the "openness' which the Liberal Foreign Minister, in his instructions to the Prince, had postulated as the condition of an Anglo-Russian agreement.

The Prince returned to London filled with the hope, artificially fed in Russian Court circles, that the new Czar would follow the Liberal course of his father in home politics. But he was strengthened in his opinion that, as far as foreign politics were concerned, the time for a comprehensive agreement with Russia had not yet arrived. He became doubly watchful of Russia's Asiatic plans, and he tried to imbue Prince Alexander of Battenburg, who had been chosen as Sovereign of Bulgaria with a loyal policy towards Turkey. The English heir-apparent did not favour Prince Alexander's endeavours to shake off the Sultan's sovereignty, because in a completely free Bulgaria, the King must either seek an attachment with Russia, or face the probability of the home political Opposition becoming Russia's tool. The subsequent fate of Prince Alexander, his abduction and forced abdication, testify to the justification for Edward's warning.

The Russian intrigues in Bulgaria and the Russian advance towards Afghanistan strengthened the Prince's conviction that a lasting agreement with Russia could not be brought nearer to achievement by friendly English advances, but by a policy with a conscious, direct aim, undeterred by the risk of an Asiatic war. Foreseeing that, under a Czar who allowed his thoroughly reactionary and imperialistic favourites to do as they liked, Anglo-Russian relations would be further strained, Edward turned his particular attention to English relations with other great European powers. At that time Germany and France created friction between themselves and England by an intensification of their colonial political

aspirations. The Prince was of the opinion—to which he adhered all his life—that England, whose relations with Russia were about to enter on a critical stage, dared not simultaneously make an enemy of the whole of Europe. For the relief of England's strategic position in regard to Russia, differences of opinion with Germany and France over colonial spheres of interest must therefore be solved by means of comprehensive colonial agreements, which would have to be framed with a generous understanding of colonial needs, economic and political, of both these great continental states. The Prince discussed with President Grévy French plans in Indo-China, and he and Queen Victoria pointed out to the Foreign Minister, Lord Granville, the necessity of not allowing petty obstacles to stand in the way of Germany's colonial policy. The Prince's criticism of English methods of interference was so emphatic, that Prince Herbert Bismarck reported from England to his father that the Prince was not only counting on a settlement of all colonial questions, but he was even working for the accomplishment of a lasting alliance with Germany.

In the eighties of last century Germany had thus no occasion to complain of any anti-German tendency in the Prince's policy, or to impute to him any intention to limit Germany's "room-to-live." While the Prince set himself against the illiberal official policy of a Liberal Cabinet at home with regard to the colonial aims of Germany, and advocated instead a truly liberal generosity, there took place the first collision, though the general public was unaware of it, between the English heir to the throne and the German Crown Prince's eldest son, later Kaiser William II. The German Prince was at that time twenty-six years old; and in 1885, in view of his father's splendid state of health, he had no expectations of a speedy succession to the German throne. He decided therefore to follow his mother's example. He

would make up for his lack of authority by doing the greatest possible mischief in foreign politics through a series of ambiguous intrigues.

Until November 1918, the shibboleth of the "Peace Kaiser" played far too great a part in official history. The English, German and Russian official publications, in which innumerable documentary proofs are to be found of the last German Kaiser's sentiments, bear witness that this dangerous ruler, who was undoubtedly mentally abnormal, used his love of peace only as a "moral disguise," and that his "secret policy," which then remained hidden from the public but is now revealed, did not by any means strive to exclude war as a method of furthering his political aims. It is true that William II never intended that Germany should begin the war, but more than ninety per cent. of his political hopes of increasing Germany's prestige and power in the future depended upon his being able to instigate quarrels between other nations.

To the Germany of "shining armour" war "between others" was always to present a welcome opportunity to play the part of dictatorial mediator, to increase its prestige or power, or to step in as inheritor of the lost positions of other lands.

William II never had a peace mentality. He never could have contemplated the possibility of dealing with foreign political situations in such a way that latent or acute conflicts between States could have been solved by peaceful means. Unknown to his parents and to the Minister of his grandfather, the ruling Kaiser, the Prince at the age of twenty-six began to cultivate relations, both personally and by letter, with the Russian Czar. All the information which his parents received as to England's feelings regarding Russia was passed on to his Russian friend, Alexander III, who was considerably older than himself. Not only did he distort this

information by poisonous commentaries, which made the greater impression at the Russian Court as the Prince at this time was considered, quite wrongly, by the European Courts to be in the confidence of Bismarck, but he also represented the actions of his uncle in a directly calumnious way, detrimental not only to his family interests, but also to the interests of the German State.

The only possible psychological explanation of William II's intrigues at St. Petersburg against his uncle is given by Count Waldersee, who states that Prince William took up an energetic attitude against England *as a natural reaction to the attempts of his mother to make Anglo-maniacs of her children.* The opposition of a temperamental young man, who was mentally not well-balanced, to the policy of his parents was not hidden from Bismarck. Neither anglophile nor russophile, but regulating his relations with Russia by the same principles and laws of expediency which always determined the attitude of the Prince of Wales, Bismarck was afraid that the young Prince might be led to commit some stupid blunder or other. The Chancellor was determined in the education of Crown Prince Frederick's heir not to make the same mistakes as Prince Albert, Queen Victoria, and Stockmar had made in the education of Edward VII. He sympathized with the Prince's desire to inform himself about the affairs of State by means of working in the Ministries, including the Foreign Office. Bismarck thus hoped to awaken in the young Prince a growing understanding of the difficulty of Germany's political situation, and of the necessity for keeping on friendly terms both with England and Russia.

During the extremely delicate political situation in Europe in 1884, when the heir to the English throne advised his Liberal Ministers not to hinder Germany's colonial political aspirations, Prince William sided with Russia. He

THE STORY OF FIDGETY WILHELM

(Up-to-date Version of "Struwwelpeter.")

"Let me see if Wilhelm can
Be a little gentleman;
Let me see if he is able
To sit still for once at table!"

* * * *

"But fidgety Will
He *won't* sit still."

* * * *

Just like any bucking horse.

"Wilhelm! We are getting cross!"

From *Punch*, February 1, 1896

began an exchange of letters, written in English, wth Alexander III. In this correspondence the German Prince represents his uncle as the worst enemy of Russia, endeavouring with the help of his sister, the German Crown Princess, to incite not only England, but also Germany to war against Russia. The English Prince is represented as the centre of an anti-Russian conspiracy in Germany. The youthful correspondent reports to the Czar, on the occasion of a visit of the Prince of Wales to Berlin in June 1884, that "the visit of the Prince of Wales has yielded and is still bearing extraordinary fruit, which will continue to multiply under the hands of my mother and the Queen of England. But these English have accidentally forgotten that I exist." He vows to his Russian cousin, "that anything I can do for you and your country will be done." But, he adds cautiously, "it will take a long time and will have to be done very slowly."

When the Prince of Wales was on a State visit to the German Court in March 1885, on the occasion of the eighty-eighth birthday of the old Emperor, young Prince William was quite beside himself. On the thirteenth of March 1885, he writes to the Czar: "We shall see the Prince of Wales here in a few days. I am not at all delighted at this unexpected apparition, because—excuse me, he is your brother-in-law —owing to his false and intriguing nature he will undoubtedly attempt in one way or another to push the Bulgarian business (against Russian interests)—may Allah send them to Hell, the Turk would say!—or to do a little political plotting behind the scenes with the ladies." It goes without saying that Prince William wished only ill-luck to the Nile expedition for the relief of Gordon in Khartoum, and of the German Emin Pascha in Wadelai. In the sentence, "May the Mahdi chuck them all into the Nile," the cultural state of the originator of the famous saying: "Europe guard your most sacred possessions," is aptly expressed.

Like all small intriguers, William took himself much more seriously and thought himself of far greater importance than he appeared to his contemporaries. The joint sojourn of the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Czar and his family, at the Court of their mutual father-in-law at Copenhagen, formed the few weeks in the life of the Russian ruler in which he could abandon his dread of Nihilists and find peace of mind in what he himself almost pathetically called a "holiday from fear and sleeplessness." Alexander III, nearly twenty years older than Prince William, succumbed easily in the soul-expanding atmosphere of Copenhagen to the charm of his politically and psychologically far superior English brother-in-law. Edward soon learned here through his wife's sister, the Czarina, that he had been libelled and calumniated, and he was informed of the contents of his nephew's letters. From this moment the psychological condition for a personal relationship built on confidence between uncle and nephew was destroyed.

Edward and the Czar had confidential talks about the political situation and about Edward's nephew, and after the English and Russian royalties had spent several holidays together at the Danish Court even Prince William was alarmed at the cool tone in which the Czar replied to his communications. When the Czar, after his stay in Copenhagen in September 1887, wished to return to Russia via Berlin, Prince William heard rumours of the closer relations between the Prince of Wales and the Czar. The Prince could not leave it even to the German Chancellor, Bismarck, to obtain the necessary information about the state of Anglo-Russian relations. He himself went to Wittenberge to meet the Czar, forced his way into the sleeping-car of the Russian ruler, and demanded of his much older cousin an "explanation" of what had happened at the Danish Court. With the protest that "he had not had his sleep out," the Czar

refused to answer the pointed question of his unpaid secret agent at the German Court.

The secret "playing at Emperor" of Prince William had its first political consequences when the English royal family, in the course of 1887, received more detailed news as to the Crown Prince Frederick's unfavourable state of health. The Prince of Wales, who did not share his sister's optimism with regard to the curability of her husband's illness, and who was aware of the physical decline of the old Kaiser, saw the day approaching with giant strides when not he, but his dangerous nephew in Central Europe, would be a ruling monarch. His nephew's ascent to the throne must, in Edward's opinion, drive Russia into the arms of France, unless a definite English policy made it more attractive to the Czar to come to an understanding with royal England than with the "pink" Radical French Republic. Edward requested that new attempts should be made to bring about an Anglo-Russian Entente. The Prince's most intimate friend, Lord Randolph Churchill, made use of introductions he had received from the Princess of Wales to discuss with the Czar the possibility of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement; and the British Minister in Teheran, Sir Drummond Wolff, also a great friend of the Prince, devised in conjunction with him a plan for the demarcation of Anglo-Russian interests in Persia and the Near East, as the basis of an Entente between the two countries. The Prince of Wales made it possible for Sir Drummond Wolff, on the occasion of the Russian ruler's visit to Berlin in October 1889, to lay this plan before the Czar. The Czar showed a lively interest in the project, and he agreed with Sir Drummond that only on the foundation of a definition of the Asiatic interests of both, "could an agreement be arrived at which would make possible friendly relations between the two countries." [1]

[1] Sir Drummond's plan was, with very few alterations, the basis of the Anglo-Russian Agreement over Persia which came about in 1907, and which was the condition for Russia's inclusion in the Entente.

While the Prince of Wales tried to open the way to St. Petersburg, and while France, in consequence of allowing her inner disintegration to come to light in the Boulanger affair, lost the weight of her voice in the European concert, Queen Victoria and Salisbury, loyally supported by Prince Edward, again made an attempt to clear up Anglo-German relations and to define and stabilize the fanciful personal policy of the youthful Kaiser. The critical Prince was more far-seeing than his mother and Salisbury, who held to his hatred of France and Russia. The political and personal instability of Queen Victoria's grandson, which increased rather than diminished, slowly blighted the English hopes of a settlement. After the election defeat of 1892, Salisbury withdrew temporarily from active politics, and the Liberal foreign politician Lord Rosebery—an intimate personal friend of the Prince of Wales—adopted as his own the classic judgment of Goncourt, which declares:

> "This young German Emperor, this neurotic mystic, this enthusiast for the religious and warlike operas of Wagner, this man, who in his dreams wears the white armour of Parsifal, with his sleepless nights, his sickly activity, his feverish brain, seems to be a monarch who will be very troublesome in the future."

# THE PEACE OFFENSIVE

THE only heavy diplomatic defeat which the Prince of Wales suffered was the result of a somewhat premature, though quite honourable, attempt to stabilize Germany's political condition at the beginning of the young Kaiser's reign. It failed because he relied upon the information of his indiscreet sister, which, though it was not set down in writing, he assumed to be the dead Kaiser's political testament. The displeasure which the Prince's step provoked in Germany was unnecessarily quickened by a most undiplomatic handling of the affair by Prince Herbert Bismarck, who was conducting family rather than State politics.

To understand the event which took place before the grass had had time to grow on Kaiser Frederick's grave, the version circulated outside Germany of the fights between the old Kaiser and the Crown Prince about the Peace Treaties of 1864, 1866 and 1871, must be briefly recapitulated. Many a European Court received the impression, not only from the English correspondence of the Empress Frederick, but also from utterances of prominent leaders of the German Parliamentary Opposition which trickled through to other countries, that, at the inter-Prussian and German conferences about the Peace conditions to be imposed on the defeated peoples of 1864, 1866 and 1871, two parties had faced each other in the Prussian camp: Kaiser William, Roon, and Moltke, who would always annex "everything that was militarily necessary," and, on the other side, the Crown Prince Frederick and his Liberal friends, who only wanted to redress an "historical injustice to the German nation."

Bismarck was said to swing like a pendulum between the

parties, playing off the father against the son, but being personally in favour of peace terms which would not exclude an understanding "with the enemies of yesterday."

Like all Court gossip, this story contained a grain of truth. It became politically serious when, by the clever treatment of Crown Princess Victoria, it was turned into the story that the German Crown Prince, on his succession to the throne, would partly redress the "injustice" which the "military" had inflicted on the conquered countries. The Prince of Wales, who was anything but a visionary, was in the eighties of last century honestly convinced that the subsequent Kaiser Frederick had faithfully promised his wife that, as soon as he had entered into power, he would give back to France a substantial portion of Lorraine, to Denmark the Danish provinces in North Schleswig, and to the Guelphs their confiscated family fortune. To execute these "moral reparations" Kaiser Frederick would have to get rid of his present Chancellor, and by adopting the complete Parliamentary system of government secure permanent support of the Centre and German Left. As relative of both the Danish and of the deposed Hanoverian royal houses, there was sufficient reason for the Prince's interest in a change of this nature in German policy. He was interested from a purely English standpoint in the restitution of territory to France. In France the lost provinces were always a point from which nationalist and militarist party groups could rise to power. The natural opposite European pole to this kind of grouping in France was the military absolutist state of the Czar. As they had both a common basis in Parliamentary democracy, it was much easier for England to agree with the French Radical Socialists, who must gain in influence over military politicians of the type of a Boulanger when once the Alsace-Lorraine question could be settled in a way that would be acceptable to French susceptibilities. A democratic France and a more Liberal Ger-

many, which might between them clear away the stumbling-block in the West, would have a soothing effect on an aggressive and warlike form of Russian Nationalism.

Thus it lay in Edward's line of policy, which aimed at a direct understanding between London, Paris and St. Petersburg, to ascertain whether, after the death of his brother-in-law, the alleged political testament of the defunct German Kaiser would play any part in his son's policy. The English heir-apparent chose the right method of approach. He put no question either to the Chancellor, who would naturally have to speak as the official representative of Germany, or to his nephew, who could reasonably plead that he had not yet had time, in consequence of the two changes on the throne within a hundred days, for a thorough discussion with his responsible advisers of the details of his future policy. In the eighties Bismarck had repeatedly entrusted his son Herbert with English missions, and in particular with the duty of establishing friendly relations with the heir to the English throne. After his last sojourn in England, Herbert Bismarck had taken leave of Prince Edward with a cordiality which, as was shown later, was not at all sincere, but which might well lead the Prince of Wales to think that he could talk with the political assistant of the great German Minister in a friendly and open way on political questions without fear of being misunderstood.

When the Prince took part in the funeral ceremonies of the Kaiser Frederick, he remained over a week in Berlin, and in a conversation with Prince Herbert Bismarck he introduced the question as to whether, and to what extent, the young Kaiser intended to act according to the foreign policy ascribed to his father. In this conversation Prince Herbert Bismarck rejected summarily any possibility of a political advance on Germany's part towards the conquered peoples of the last three wars. In reports to his mother and to Salis-

bury, Prince Edward maintained that Prince Herbert had put an end to the conversation by this declaration, and that he had not pursued the matter further by ascertaining the official German view or the wishes of his brother-in-law.

Prince Herbert Bismarck, reporting on this conversation to the young Kaiser, declared that the English heir-apparent had straightway, as spokesman for England, demanded the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, North Schleswig to Denmark, and that the Guelphs should be reinstated in Hanover or Brunswick. If one bears in mind the German Kaiser's activity as a political intriguer before he ascended the throne, it is easy to imagine the explosive effect of this information from Prince Herbert, who entirely overlooked the political powerlessness of the English heir-apparent. The Prince, who was neither an English Minister nor an official English diplomat, could under no circumstances "demand"; he could only provide his mother and her advisers with the most authentic information about the political views of the incalculable, and therefore to the politically clear-minded English almost feared, German ruler. And this had to be done as speedily as possible in view of the extraordinarily intricate political situation in Europe which, a few months before the Prince took this step, had occasioned Bismarck's sensational speech, concluding with the words: "We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world."

The soundings of the Prince, which took place in the interests of furthering peaceful relations in Europe, resulted in a petty-minded newspaper campaign against him, led by the official German Press. As uncle and nephew were soon to be the joint guests of the Austrian royal couple, Kaiser William gave the Austrian Emperor to understand, in a form which was meant to reach the Prince's ears, that his visit to Vienna would only commence when his uncle had left. On the earnest entreaty of the Austrian Emperor, Prince

Edward decided that he would not cancel his visit, as he was interested in hunting and in the manœuvres, but that he would break it by a lengthy stay at the Roumanian Court, during the German Kaiser's sojourn in Vienna. When the Kaiser announced his intention of paying his first visit to his grandmother, the Prince declared he would take part in the reception of the German ruler only if his nephew would apologize to him beforehand for the Vienna incident. Relatives sought to intercede between the two, and the Kaiser's visit in 1889 took place only after he had promised his grandmother not to be rude to his uncle again. This promise, like so many others of the impulsive monarch, was merely a "scrap of paper."

The Queen, Salisbury, and the Prince, who were all of one mind in the endeavour to bring to a safe and speedy conclusion the Heligoland settlement, which was particularly advantageous for England, did everything to flatter the young Kaiser's vanity. The Kaiser was created Lord High Admiral of the English Fleet, and he acknowledged this unusual distinction to his grandmother in the following sentences, which were not exactly soothing to England's pride:

> "It really gave me such an immense pleasure that I am now able to feel and take an interest in your Fleet, as if it were my own, and with keenest sympathy shall I watch every phase of its further development, that the British ironclads, coupled with mine and my army, are the strongest guarantees of peace, which may Heaven help us to preserve! Should, however, the will of Providence lay the heavy burden on us of fighting for our homes and destinies, then may the English Fleet be seen forging ahead side by side with the German, and the 'Red-Coat' marching to victory with the 'Pomeranian Grenadier.' "

# THE RUSSIAN NEPHEW

WHILE Queen Victoria and Salisbury, with the Heligoland Agreement in mind, were endeavouring to flatter the young German Kaiser's vanity and thus to concentrate the goodwill of his personal policy on England, the Prince of Wales took great pains to further these political aims during the annual visits which the Kaiser was accustomed to pay his grandmother on the occasion of the regatta at Cowes. To the Ministers and to his trusted friends the Prince expressed pretty plainly his opinion that he considered his mother's wooing futile, but nevertheless he approached his nephew in a friendly spirit when they met in Society, even though the young Kaiser's arrogant behaviour in the Royal Yacht Club and his provocative treatment of the old Prime Minister, Salisbury, made friendly intercourse most difficult. Only on one occasion did Edward give outward expression to his feelings. Considering it to be his duty to protect Lord Salisbury from the Kaiser's "bullying behaviour," he made a sharp protest to his nephew.

The noble revenge which Edward took on his nephew for the Vienna insult showed him equally supreme as a finished man of the world; and as the generous statesman who could honour greatness in the powerless. The Prince and Princess of Wales had been invited by the German royal couple to pay a State visit to Berlin in the year 1890, and this visit took place two days after Bismarck's dismissal. For three days they were the official guests of the Kaiser. Then followed a "private stay" of three days, during which time the Prince of Wales wished to talk over family affairs with the Empress Frederick.

Bismarck, who was still in Berlin during the English visit, was living under the most unpleasant conditions in the Chancellor's palace, in rooms almost adjoining those of his successor, Caprivi. Bismarck described the situation in the house, in which he had ruled for decades, in the following way:

> "At the very moment I sent in my resignation Caprivi had already taken possession of a part of the Chancellor's official residence; I saw that ambassadors, ministers and diplomats had to wait on the landing. I was forced to hurry my packing and departure. On the 29th of March I left Berlin, after this compulsory premature vacation of my residence, and with a show of military honour at the station which the Kaiser had ordered, and which I can rightly call a funeral ceremony of the first class."

On 25th March the discharged Chancellor received a visit from the Prince of Wales, and a few days later, the English heir-apparent dined with Prince Herbert Bismarck, that small son of a great father, who had given the Prince some most unpleasant hours by his incorrect rendering of the conversation on Kaiser Frederick's political testament. In the course of his visit to the Kaiser, the Prince inquired as to the reasons which had prompted his nephew to dismiss Bismarck. The Kaiser showed his uncle a telegram to Queen Victoria, giving as a reason the unsatisfactory state of the Prince's health. After his visit to Bismarck, Edward wrote to his mother:

> "It has hurt and offended the old Prince terribly that he was forced to retire, but he appeared to be in an excellent state of health."

On his return to England it occurred to the Prince that the dismissal of Bismarck had removed all restraint on the obstinate and unbalanced will of his nephew. He is said to

have adopted the opinion of the Liberal politician Harcourt, who heard of Bismarck's dismissal, with the commentary: "It is not a pleasant prospect to have Europe left at the mercy of a hot-head who seems also to be a fool."

This apprehension of the Liberal politicians, which the Prince shared and which helped to decide his attitude on foreign affairs was not aroused merely by the German Kaiser's weakness of character, but, to an almost greater degree, by the possible reactions which an unsettled Central Europe might have on the policy of other countries. In the nineties, in consequence of political friction with regard to the Colonies, France hated England and Italy even more than she hated Germany. During the last few years of Alexander III's life, after the denunciation of the Russo-German agreement, Russian policy concentrated all its energy on the conclusion of a Russo-French pact; this was first realized as a diplomatic fact in an exchange of telegrams between President and Czar on the occasion of the visit of the Russian Fleet to Toulon in the year 1893.

The Dual Alliance was a remarkable creation with a double soul. The Russian politicians who took part in its accomplishment desired, above all things, to avoid a repetition of the situation at the Berlin Congress when, in spite of all her political efforts, Russia stood alone, and was obliged to purchase the diplomatic support of Germany and France by large economic or financial concessions. Above all, Russia wished to break away from her isolated position as far as England was concerned. England, with her interests in every continent, had innumerable possibilities of making, at least temporarily, diplomatic friends for herself by over-seas concessions. Russia had no wish to appear again as a lonely outsider at an international conference or in diplomatic negotiations on world affairs. Russia's aims in signing the Dual Alliance, though indeed anti-English, were to an overwhelm-

ing degree of a defensive character. The French Radical Socialists considered the alliance a defence against Germany. The nightmare against which all thoughtful French politicians, who were working for the political and economical rebuilding of France, had to struggle, was the fear that Germany might start another short preventive war for the possession of Belfort and a few French Colonies, before France had recovered completely and consolidated the Republic. The alliance was to be a protection against these alleged German aims. The French Nationalists, on the contrary, saw in the alliance an instrument which could be used alternatively against England in colonial political quarrels, and against Germany in European questions. As France was in a state of internal political confusion after the Boulanger and Panama affairs, it was very difficult for foreign observers to judge which party would take the lead in the Cabinet and in the Press. The history of the Third Empire indeed led one to assume that every fairly large French political Party would seek in an active foreign policy an outlet for the internal political tension. The British Ambassador in Paris reported in this sense on 3rd November 1893, to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Rosebery, whose Conservative predecessor, Lord Salisbury, had handed on to him the task of arranging an Anglo-German rapprochement—which never seemed to get one whit further. In his remarkable report,[1] Lord Dufferin not only drew the attention of the British Government to the fact that the inner political situation in France required England to be prepared "for all possible eventualities" of an armed conflict with France, but the gifted English diplomat also pointed out that the stable, and therefore, from the standpoint of diplomatic negotiations, the most practicable, element of the new concentration of power was Russia.

Dufferin's advice, reading "between the lines" of his re-

[1] See Appendix, p. 359.

port, was heeded all the more readily in England because, since the completion of the Siberian railway, the thrust of Russian Imperialism had changed its direction from Central Asia more towards the Far East, and the Prince, in consequence of this and of his many personal experiences of his German nephew, was again anxious to take the direct route to St. Petersburg. So far as the Liberal Cabinet was concerned, it only needed to take up the Gladstonian policy of friendship towards Russia. To eliminate completely from the very beginning any idea of anti-German tendency in an Anglo-Russian agreement, the Prince of Wales suggested that England should fulfil an old wish of the German Kaiser's: appoint him colonel of an English regiment. Rosebery opposed this unusual honour for the Kaiser, which might easily be interpreted in an unfriendly way by France and Russia as a sign of a political alliance between England and Germany. Rosebery defined England's attitude toward Germany by saying that such a distinction was conferred only when one wished to emphasize particularly either feelings of gratitude or friendship. At the present moment, continued Lord Rosebery, "there is no necessity for the display of any extraordinary friendship, still less for the demonstration of any extraordinary gratitude."

The unexpected death of Czar Alexander IIIin November 1894, and the ascent of the throne by Nicholas, who was betrothed to a grandchild of Queen Victoria, seemed to offer England the desired opportunity of a renewed attempt to bring about an Anglo-Russian entente. Once more the Prince of Wales was charged with this mission. He represented the Queen at the funeral of the dead Czar, and at the new Czar's marriage with Princess Alix of Hesse. In frequent conversations with the young peace visionary, the English heir-apparent thought he had made a thorough psychological preparation for an entente. In the diplomatic world outside

England, practically all Europe recorded an Anglo-Russian conciliation, and the British Government was permitted to indulge in the hope that the change of ruler in Russia had considerably diminished the dangers of the alliance, and that the personality and sentiments of the new monarch even constituted a guarantee that Russia, by virtue of the alliance, might prevent the anti-English tricks of the French.

Rosebery expressed this view of the Cabinet in the following words:

> "Never has your Royal Highness stood so high in the national esteem as to-day, for never have you had such an opportunity. That at last has come, and has enabled you to justify the highest anticipations, and to render a signal service to your country as well as Russia and the peace of the world."

Harcourt recorded at the same time that Prince Edward's visit had created "not only in fact, but (what is not less important) in public opinion and sentiment, the most intimate and friendly relations with Russia. This is an experiment which has never been fairly tried in foreign affairs, and it is my humble opinion that there is none which is more likely to minister to the cause of peace and good will."

In the South African war and in the struggle for domination in the Far East, it was shown that the personal sympathies of the rulers and the family relationships of the dynasties were not yet sufficient to create a lasting entente. Only when, through the force of the Prince's personality, British policy was ready to follow materially the direction of his and Sir Drummond Wolff's ideas, which put balance of interest before political friendship, could British attempts at rapprochement bring tangible results. The enthusiasm in Par-

liament and in the Press at the result of the Prince's visit to Russia soon flagged, and even turned into pessimism when the young Czar showed himself to be of a weak character. From day to day he succumbed to ever changing influences and took up a "firm stand" only in a direction particularly unpleasant for England. After the coronation of Czar Nicholas, England had indulged in the hope that he might establish his throne on a new and healthy foundation by the creation of Parliamentary institutions. The disappointment was therefore all the greater when the young ruler declared that he considered all Parliamentary systems and the extension of the people's right to be crazy schemes, and that he had made up his mind (this met with the German Kaiser's warmest approval) to hold as firmly to the principles of autocracy as his father had done. The same events in Russian history which led to the institution of the Duma, finally created more lasting psychological conditions in the Russian ruling caste and in the feeling of the English people for closer relations between the two countries.

CHAPTER V

# PATIENCE

## I

### SPLENDID ISOLATION

THE journalistic experts and commentators on British foreign policy have celebrated the last decade of the nineteenth century as the era of Britain's self-elected "splendid isolation" in world politics. A conscious attempt has been made to set up this epoch as an antithesis to the entente policy of the first decade of the present century. The World War is said to have been caused by the wanton abandonment on the part of Great Britain of its "splendid isolation" policy, in favour of one which entangled the country in the foreign schemes of other governments. The collections of documents and statesmen's memoirs hitherto published have at any rate succeeded in clearing away the myth of the voluntary character of British isolation at the turn of the century.

It is certainly in accord with the pride of a great nation to construe periods of lesser success in foreign politics as periods of deliberate moderation. Now that the second period of office of the Salisbury Cabinet has receded sufficiently into the historical background of British foreign politics, it can be quite impartially demonstrated that the theory of Britain's "splendid isolation" was built up on the fiction, entirely comprehensible from a psychological point of view, of pleading "will not" where it was clearly a case of "cannot." From Kaiser William II's accession to the throne, Salisbury and Queen Victoria persistently sought Germany's friendship,

and the succeeding Liberal Cabinet was no less in earnest when it discussed the question of whether, in view of the instability of the Kaiser's policy, there was any chance of arriving at an understanding with France and Russia. It fell to Lord Dufferin to supply the classical answer to the question of England's chances in Paris. In Russia the attempt at a rapprochement was abortive owing to difficulties inherent in the Czar's character, the internal political conditions of the country, and the lack of a comprehensive and practical adjustment of Far-Eastern interests. There existed with Austria and Italy no fundamental common interests which might have made a prolonged collaboration possible. When Salisbury again took over the reins of office from Rosebery, the relations with Germany were undefined, those with France and Russia entirely unstable, and those with most other countries merely correct or lukewarm.

To a man mentally as indolent as Salisbury had become at the end of his life, an opportunist attitude to foreign political events was almost a foregone conclusion. Only where British interests were actively threatened did he intervene. For the rest, he kept a watchful eye on new developments and took advantage of the political mistakes of other Cabinets, either through remaining on the defensive or by assuming the offensive and intervening in the disturbed relations of third parties. This policy, which amounted to a moral isolation but had nothing "splendid" about it, supplied to critics of British diplomacy a welcome pretext to speak of "perfidious Albion." Sometimes the critics were justified, sometimes not, but they failed to recognize the compelling force dictating this policy. The necessity of gaining time and allowing the actions or experiments of third parties to create new situations, upon which influence might be brought to bear in order to obtain scope for independent British action, naturally appeared to the outside observer as

"QUOUSQUE TANDEM?" OR, ONE AT A TIME

Arth-r B-lf-r (driver, to officious friend, Joe Ch-mb-rl-n). "Look here! We shall never get on like this! Am I driving or are *you*?"

From *Punch*, April 6, 1895

closely resembling the egotistical and unprincipled policy of a Power which, whilst "laughing in its sleeve," inveigled other States into disputes and thus gained power and prestige at the expense of the exhausted combatants.

Salisbury, who is always saddled with the responsibility for the British policy of splendid isolation, was not a Machiavelli. He was a man with a second-rate intellect but of sterling qualities who, with one foot already in the grave, was disinclined to assume risks which he could not expect to liquidate in the course of the limited time at his disposal.

The natural contrast between the heir to the throne and the Prime Minister was more largely due to the difference in their ages than to the divergence of their views—Edward was fifty-four when Salisbury as a man of sixty-six resumed office in 1895. Until he ascended the throne the Prince, who was just approaching the culminating point of his mental and political development, had to watch the years slip by, years irretrievably lost to him and his creative forces, years wasted in the forced enlistment of an active, vital, and dynamic personality in the service of a policy which, although not without justification objectively, could at best only yield chance gains and never result in the realization of vital aims.

There were two men in Salisbury's Cabinet, Chamberlain and Balfour, who competed amicably and fairly in the hope of succeeding the rapidly ageing Prime Minister. Chamberlain, who was of the same age as the Prince of Wales, and akin to him in temperament, but as a Cabinet Minister had more scope for action than the heir to the throne, represented in the Salisbury Cabinet the "Liberal Unionists" who had changed over from the Liberal to the Conservative party in 1886. He was the leader of a group upon which the life of the Cabinet largely depended, and he exploited this fact to create for himself a position within

the Government which went far beyond the independence of action permitted to the average Cabinet Minister. This liberty of action was used by Chamberlain for the purpose of bringing up and disposing of problems of colonial politics; but on various occasions he also took the initiative in questions of foreign politics, in order to ascertain by means of feelers and suggestions in grandiloquent speeches, whether other and more positive diplomatic means of action than the cool reserve of the policy of splendid isolation were possible. Chamberlain's practical courage doubtless placed him at a considerable disadvantage as regards the Salisbury succession, and Balfour, who had the wit to wait and who confirmed his old leader and master in the illusion that the policy of reserve would be in better keeping in the hands of the apathetic philosopher than in those of Chamberlain, the expansive imperialist, succeeded his uncle as Prime Minister.

## 2

### THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Chamberlain's independence in dealing with colonial affairs was soon to convince the Prince and the imperialist of the peculiar character of the "splendour" of Britain's isolation. For decades the frontiers between the South American Colony of British Guiana and Venezuela had been in dispute, and the borderlands had been raided alternately by British settlers and hunters, and South American bands of adventurers. No occupation of the disputed territory by either of the parties had, however, been attempted. When in 1895 the Venezuelans set out in earnest to occupy the borderlands, and so to prejudge the issue in favour of their *de facto* interests, Salisbury, at the instance of Chamberlain,

protested to Caracas. This led to a protest by the United States, in which it was asserted that Britain's demand to Venezuela to evacuate the strip of frontier territory violated the Monroe Doctrine. In the second half of 1895, after Britain had delivered an ultimatum to Venezuela, the interchange of views between England and America became more and more unfriendly.

Shortly before Christmas this disagreement led the two countries to the brink of war, and if the Prince of Wales had not, during the most critical hours of the conflict, followed his own instinct rather than the advice given to him by the aged Salisbury, who was very bitter against America, it might easily have ended with the loss of Canada. When British public feeling had been raised to fever heat by President Cleveland's Christmas message to Congress, in which he claimed the right to adjudicate on behalf of his country on the frontier dispute, solely in his capacity as guardian of the Monroe Doctrine and without being empowered to do so by the parties concerned, the well-known American newspaper magnate, Pulitzer, enquired of the Prince of Wales whether he was disposed to send a peace message to the American nation through the Christmas number of the *New York World*.

The Prince, who had in his conversations with diplomats and with members of the somewhat obdurate British Government, identified himself in those critical weeks with a peaceful solution of the American conflict, at once drafted the following telegram:

> "I earnestly trust and cannot but believe present crisis will be arranged in a manner satisfactory to both countries, and will be succeeded by same warm feeling of friendship which has existed between them for so many years. (December 23, 1895)."

When the Prince showed this telegram to Salisbury on 23rd December, the old gentleman was somewhat piqued and would not hear of its despatch, and he absolutely refused to sanction any gesture of reconciliation. The Prince, however, who judged less optimistically than Salisbury the extent to which Canada might be endangered in the event of an Anglo-American war, sent the telegram, and it created the greatest possible sensation in America. A few weeks later an agreement was reached regarding arbitration procedure, and in the course of the following year the first draft of the Anglo-American general treaty of arbitration was drawn up.

The dangerous crisis of the year 1889 caused the Prince, as had previously been his wont, to intensify his efforts at establishing personal relations with leading Americans in London, Cowes, Paris and Homburg. When in 1903 England and Germany took action against President Castro because he had personally suspended the payment of interest on his country's foreign loans, Great Britain showed the greatest deference to American susceptibilities on the question of a blockade of the Venezuelan coast. The Prince had now become King Edward VII, and to his Foreign Minister, Lansdowne, he insisted that the solidarity with Germany and the efforts to force Venezuela to pay should not be pushed so far as to alienate precious American sympathies.

America responded to the consideration thus shown by Britain by a personal compliment addressed to the King. When the post of American Ambassador in London became vacant, the King's most intimate personal friend, the newspaper king, Whitelaw Reid, was nominated; a striking recognition of the fact that the King's political importance was appraised at its real value even by a Republican Cabinet.

THE PRINCES' MESSAGE

"Sir Francis Knollys is desired by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York to thank Mr. Pulitzer for his cablegram. They earnestly trust, and cannot but believe, that the present crisis will be arranged in a manner satisfactory to both countries, and will be succeeded by the same warm feeling of friendship which has existed between them for so many years. Sandringham, Dec. 24, 1895."

From *Punch*, January 4, 1896

Chamberlain's activities produced an immediate effect in South Africa. After the British defeat at Majuba, Gladstone had granted full self-government for home affairs to the Boer Republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, under British suzerainty, without making any reservations in favour of the big British capitalists—who had been exploiting the gold-mining area of the Witwatersrand since 1887 with the aid of British and German engineers—and so compelling the primitive Boer State to make due provision for the economic pre-requisites of large-scale industry.

The natives policy and the tax policy of the Transvaal Republic soon led to clashes between the Boer leaders and the gold-mining magnates. The latter, mostly British, approached their Government and demanded that it should use its suzerainty for the purpose of forcing upon the Boer Government the recognition of the citizenship and the voting rights of foreigners working and residing in the Transvaal. In this demand the mining magnates were prompted by the cosideration that, when once the mining engineers and white miners had secured the right to vote in the Transvaal, it would not be difficult to modernize the Boer State from the inside and bring about a voluntary union with the Cape Colony and Natal.

In 1881 the Prince had already strongly expressed his dislike of the Little England policy of Gladstone, which had stopped short of securing a definite determination of the political and economic position of the South African Republics within the structure of the British sphere of interest in South Africa, and he therefore welcomed Chamberlain's proposal to make a new convention with the Boers.

The Prince hoped that the negotiations to this effect would provide an opportunity to throw off the shackles of British inertia in foreign politics, and the colonial activity displayed by both France and Germany appeared to favour his plans. Germany then owned a territory in South-West Africa which was dovetailed in between the Cape Colony and Portuguese Angola, and which bordered on the sparsely settled territory of Rhodesia. On the African East coast, German territory bordered on the Portuguese Colony, Lourenco Marquez, and drove a wedge into the projected British line of communication from the Cape to Cairo. Portugal, which was always in financial straits offered for sale its colonies all over the world, and Germany was greatly interested in acquiring the two large colonies in Africa. If a bargain had been struck, Germany would have become the neighbour of the Transvaal in East Africa; and in West Africa it would have been separated only by a narrow strip from the sparsely settled Rhodesian territory, which could not be defended against invasion. France, however, was bidding against Germany for the acquisition of the Portuguese colonies, and there was the danger that Portugal, in playing off each of the would-be purchasers against the other, would "let in," on both the West and East coasts of Africa, neighbours who might prove very troublesome to Britain by harbouring anti-British expansionist designs. Both France and Germany were at that time suspected in London of favouring an attempt to supplant Britain as the protector of the Boer Republic. "Oom Paul" Kruger's ambassador, Dr. Leyds, who was travelling in Europe, very freely hinted that the Boer Republic would be prepared to enter into a political and economic union with a strong military power having possessions in Africa, as a protection against Britain's intention of "degrading" them to the status of a British colony. Chamberlain, who agreed with the brilliant head of the British South Africa Company,

Cecil Rhodes, in his view that a new orientation of the relations between Britain and the Boer Republics must create a starting point for the consolidation of British supremacy in South Africa, defended the interests of the "Uitlanders," who considered themselves wronged and oppressed, with great energy in the negotiations with the Boer Government.

Rhodes, who had no confidence in Salisbury as a purposeful director of British foreign policy, established contact with the mining magnates and in concert with them made plans for a *coup d'état*, both from "inside and outside," at the beginning of 1896. The population of the Witwatersrand was to proclaim a provisional Government under the leadership of the mining managers, and from Rhodesia police detachments of the British South Africa Company—a private Company with a political character, on the model of the old East India Company—were to invade the Transvaal under the command of Dr. Jameson, an official of Rhodes, and march to Johannesburg or Pretoria to the assistance of the insurgent population of the Rand. By this combined *coup d'état* Rhodes intended to compel the British Government to array itself openly against the Boer Republics on the side of the "Uitlanders." The plan failed entirely. There was no uprising; only a slight disturbance of the peace occurred in Johannesburg—while the Boers had time to concentrate their commandos against the weak expedition of Jameson. After "battles," which had a strong element of comic opera, Jameson capitulated on 2nd January 1896.

This sudden bolt from the blue had been equally surprising to the British Government, to the Transvaal and the European Cabinets. The Prince wrote on New Year's morning of 1896 that he considered the news of the Jameson raid as a very unpleasant New Year's greeting. England's position was altogether unfortunate. Chamberlain and Salis-

bury hastened to inform the foreign Cabinets that—as was subsequently borne out by the parliamentary investigation into the affair—Rhodes and Jameson had taken the law into their own hands in the hope of confronting Britain with a *fait accompli.*

These statements of the British Government were received at the Wilhelmstrasse and at the Berlin Court with undisguised incredulity. The German Ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt, received instructions on 2nd January 1896 to lodge with the Foreign Office a German ultimatum, in which England was told that Germany would tolerate no alteration in the political *status quo* of Africa. This ultimatum was actually delivered in Downing Street after Jameson had already surrendered. On the following day, when the Boers were masters of the situation and England had made no preparations to intervene on behalf of Jameson or mobilize regular troops against the Transvaal, the Kaiser and the Secretary of State revoked their ultimatum. Hatzfeldt went to the Foreign Office with a heavy heart, but on his arrival he happily discovered that his ultimatum was still lying unopened on the writing desk of Lord Salisbury, who was away at Hatfield, and he was able to secure the return of the ridiculous document—which has only become known to posterity through the recent publication of documents by Germany—without its contents having come to the knowledge of a single Englishman. Only this lucky chance made it possible for the subsequent incident caused by Kaiser William II's telegram to President Kruger to be disposed of without provoking an Anglo-German war.

When on 3rd January news of Jameson's surrender reached Berlin, the Kaiser called a Council at which the heads of the Navy and the Foreign Office were present. As the ultimatum decided on the preceding day had become purposeless, the view was expressed on all sides that something else would

have "to be done about it." A welcome pretext in favour of a German initiative was supplied by the telegram of the German Consul in Pretoria, who proposed the landing of marines for the protection of the few German inhabitants of Johannesburg in the event of "Uitlander" disturbances, or of fighting between "Uitlanders" and Boers. Such a landing party could have been easily disembarked from men-of-war stationed in Delagoa Bay, and transported to Pretoria by the Portuguese Railway. The Kaiser desired to declare forthwith a German Protectorate over the Transvaal, to mobilize the marines, and to send them to South Africa. The Chancellor and other members of the Conference made it clear to the Kaiser that such a procedure would mean immediate war with Great Britain, but, when their arguments failed to produce any impression, the permanent head of the Colonial Office, Kayser, conceived the idea that the Kaiser's zeal for action might possibly be appeased by a demonstrative telegram of congratulation to President Kruger. Nothing could more aptly exemplify the German monarch's infirmity of purpose than the course of this conference, in which he allowed himself to be diverted from a perfectly clear national policy—although it is an open question whether it could have been carried through successfully against Great Britain—in favour of a melodramatic personal demonstration.

The telegram excited a storm of anger in England. British squadrons were put on a war footing, and on the German side preparations were made in East Africa and on the German ships in Delagoa Bay to send expeditionary troops and landing parties to Pretoria through Portuguese territory. Salisbury summarized the position in his conversation with Eckardstein by saying that the first German soldier setting foot on Transvaal soil would mean an Anglo-German war, a war which was bound to develop into a world war as

France had given Britain to understand that it would at the beginning preserve a benevolent neutrality in favour of England, but towards the end of the war it would actively intervene against Germany. Russia had expressly promised Britain absolute neutrality and, above all, passivity in Asia.

In this emergency, when according to their own testimony the German Chancellor and Foreign Minister proved themselves too weak to restrain the Kaiser's excessive zeal for action, and when nobody in Berlin had the courage to convene the Reichstag and so enable the people's representatives to step in, the German Kaiser and the then English heir-apparent openly opposed each other for the first time.

The Kaiser wrote to the Czar:

> "Now suddenly the Transvaal Republic has been attacked in a most foul way as it seems not without England's knowledge. I have used very severe language in London, and have opened communications with Paris for common defence of our endangered interests, as French and German colonists have immediately joined hands of their own accord to help the outraged Boers. I hope you will also kindly consider the question, as it is one of principle of upholding treaties once concluded. I hope all will come right, but, come what may, I shall never allow the British to stamp out the Transvaal."

The Prince of Wales who, we may assume, had been informed by his mother of the weakness of the Kaiser's advisers, pursued a different course. The Marquis de Soveral, an old friend of the Prince, had a short time previously left the London Embassy for the Portuguese Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Prince obtained through him a categorical declaration from the Portuguese Government according to which Portugal would not permit the landing of German

troops in an East African Portuguese port. The immediate danger of war was thus averted.

After having secured this statement, the Prince requested his mother to make a very energetic personal *démarche* at the German Imperial Court. The Queen contented herself with a very quiet and dignified protest, in which she emphasized her strong moral condemnation of Jameson's raid. At the same time she pointed out to her grandson that German colonial pioneers had on many occasions shown themselves only moderately eager to respect British interests.

The Kaiser replied to his grandmother on 8th January 1896, five days after the despatch of the Kruger telegram, in the following letter:

"Never was the Telegram intended as a step against England or your Government. By Sir Frank as well as by the Embassy in London we knew that Government had done everything in its power to stop the Freebooters, but that the latter had flatly refused to obey and in a most unprecedented manner went and surprised a neighbouring country in deep peace. . . .

"The reasons for the telegram were three-fold: First in the name of peace as such which had been suddenly violated, and which I, always following your glorious example, try to maintain everywhere. This course of action has till now so often carried your so valuable approval. Secondly, for our Germans in Transvaal and our Bondholders at home with our invested capital of 250–300 millions and the local commerce of the Coast of 10–12 millions, which were in danger in case fighting broke out in the towns. Thirdly, as your Government and Ambassador had both made clear that the men were acting in open disobedience to your orders, they were rebels. I, of course thought that they were a mixed mob of gold

diggers quickly summoned together, who are generally known to be strongly mixed with the scum of all nations, never suspecting there were real Englishmen or officers among them.

"Now to me rebels against the will of the most gracious Majesty the Queen, are to me the most execrable beings in the world, and I was so incensed at the idea of your orders having been disobeyed, and thereby Peace and the security also of my fellow countrymen endangered, that I thought it necessary to show that publicly. It has, I am sorry to say, been totally misunderstood by the British Press. I was standing up for law, order, and obedience to a Sovereign whom I revere and adore, and whom I thought paramount for her subjects. Those were my motives, and I challenge anybody who is a gentleman to point out where there is anything hostile to England in this. The Secretary of Transvaal was even at his audience the day before yesterday cautioned by me to warn his Government on no account to do anything that could be interpreted as being hostile to England. The gunboat in Delagoa Bay was only to land in case street fights and incendiarism broke out, to protect the German Consulate as they do in China or elsewhere, but was forbidden to take any active part in the row: nothing more. As to the silly idea in the Press that I was or wanted to behave hostilely to England, I with a clear conscience refer to Lord Salisbury, who has material enough in his hands from the last years to know my thoughts and what I do for England. But the English Press has been rather rash in its conjectures, and having since some months freely lavished its displeasure on our devoted heads, the Home Press are still sore. . . . This made people rather hot and rash. But I hope and trust this will soon pass away, as it is simply nonsense that two great nations, nearly related in kinsman-

ship and religion, should stand aside and view each other askance, with the rest of Europe as lookers-on. What would the Duke of Wellington and old Blücher say if they saw this?"

These assurances by the Kaiser were accepted *pro forma* in Great Britain. Salisbury declared that the telegram was the Kaiser's personal work, but the Prince of Wales made enquiries in Berlin, through his mother, to ascertain to what extent the Kaiser's action had been approved by his Ministers, as he believed this would enable him to arrive at an understanding of the popular feeling in Germany. It was only on meeting the Czar that the Prince learned the full extent of his nephew's duplicity. From the clash of two absolutely dissimilar natures there arose after the incident of the Kruger telegram a strong distrust of the younger man by the older, which the irresponsible utterances of the Kaiser subsequently only tended to increase.

## 4

### FASHODA

During the next few years, when the punishment of the leaders of the Jameson Raid was being discussed between London and Pretoria and the relations between England and the Boer Republic were therefore still more uncertain and unpleasant than before the raid, Chamberlain opened two other colonial problems which were of importance from the point of view of foreign policy: Kitchener was commissioned to reconquer Khartoum and the Sudan and the question of a redistribution of their possessions in Polynesia was raised between England, America and Germany. Kitchener's advance southward led to an extremely active

colonial expansion on the part of France in Central and West Africa. There were continual frontier incidents on the Niger, and France organized and equipped Marchand's military "exploring expedition" which was intended to advance right through the Continent of Africa to Fashoda on the northern arm of the Nile. Salisbury's demand that Marchand should leave Fashoda considerably increased France's animosity towards England. But the conflict was at the same time an important first step towards the accomplishment of the Entente. The aggressive and short-sighted French Foreign Minister, Hanotaux, who resembled the German Kaiser in his nervous activity, was succeeded by one who considered it imperative to restore the prestige of France among European statesmen by a definite and consistent foreign policy. Delcassé quickly settled the Fashoda dispute, in a manner pleasing to English self-esteem, and dropped the "policy of pinpricks" in Asia and Africa. Hanotaux's Ambassador, who had made himself somewhat unpopular in London, was replaced by Paul Cambon, the most capable man in the French diplomatic service. During the course of his first few years at the Quai d'Orsay, Delcassé regarded it as an open question whether a calm and decided French policy would lead to an advance towards Germany or England. In the spring of 1899 the British Ambassador in Paris reported that France was armed to the teeth, and that a war with England was considered probable before the year was out. When advances were made by the German and Austrian Ambassadors, Delcassé adopted a non-committal attitude, demanding from the Germans the submission of definite proposals for a Franco-German alliance, or a corresponding political working agreement. He used a different method with England. He knew that if he wished to interest England in an Anglo-French Entente, he must not approach Lord Salisbury, who would soon be retiring, but he must win over the most active

English politician, Joseph Chamberlain. Delcassé therefore let it be known in London that he was prepared to make all the disputed colonial problems between England and France the subject of a comprehensive and possibly final settlement. In contrast to Hanotaux, who was always voicing French demands but was never prepared to recognize traditional English spheres of interest, he held out hopes that France would generously consider the English point of view. The idea of an Anglo-French Entente, which had been for decades a political article of faith with the English heir to the throne, was as an object of French political activity certainly older than that competitive building of battleships which first made of the German-English antagonism a serious affair.

The Prince of Wales kept in the background during the acute phase of the Anglo-French disagreement. Although he feared that the maintaining of the English point of view in the Fashoda dispute would have serious consequences, he shared the British Government's opinion that permanently friendly relations with France would not be brought about by the sheathing of the British sword, or by a one-sided surrender of British interests. As patron of the British section of the Paris international exhibition of 1900, he cultivated friendly relations with certain French statesmen and political economists. But he refrained from any active propaganda, and he did not seek to exert his influence in favour of an Anglo-French Entente. Among the Prince's new friendships, the most important from a political point of view was the new French Ambassador, Cambon. With Cambon's appointment there was at the English Court a first-rate French diplomatist who fundamentally agreed with the Prince's view that the future development of Anglo-French relations must lead to a closer understanding between the two countries. The English Prince and the French diplomatist un-

derstood the technique of their profession too well to endanger the realization of their political ideas by any misplaced "activity."

## 5

### THE GERMAN PROPOSALS

When at the end of the last century, Cambon took up office in London, England and Germany were in disagreement about two matters of minor importance. England had raised an objection to Germany's title to Samoa; and Germany had retaliated by protesting against an Anglo-Portuguese Entente which was to be based on Portugal receiving a fairly large loan from England, and England's guaranteeing the ownership of the Portuguese colonies. Since the Portuguese colonies offered to Germany one of its few possibilities of colonial expansion, the German Government was bound to regard with suspicion any attempts by another country to obtain economic and diplomatic predominance in Lisbon.

Whilst Germany and England were negotiating about Samoa and the Portuguese colonies, the Kaiser repeatedly suggested that all these difficulties could be removed if England would join the Triple Alliance. In 1898, in conversations with British diplomats and military men, he complained bitterly that England ignored his attempts towards an alliance. (See Appendix.) Since towards the end of last century it was not possible for England to approach directly France and Russia without a loss of prestige, and as Lord Salisbury could not by any means be persuaded to initiate any move, the *de facto* leadership in British foreign politics devolved more and more on Chamberlain. Chamberlain realized that the differences with the Boers were becoming

acute, whilst the colonial negotiations with France dragged on very slowly. He anticipated, with a certain degree of probability, that the Boer problem would lead to war at the very moment when England would have achieved neither an agreement with France nor an improvement in Anglo-Russian relations. Without in any way committing England, Chamberlain decided to test the sincerity of the German desire for an alliance. In 1898 he made a secret agreement with Germany, which provided that the two countries should advance to Portugal a joint loan. In return Portugal was to undertake to cede no part of her colonies to other Powers, and England and Germany were to be given a joint option on the Portuguese colonies. This agreement, which was meant to obviate the possibility of any changes in the balance of colonial power to England's disadvantage, was considered in Germany, and especially by the Kaiser, to be a preliminary to an Anglo-German Alliance. These conclusions were premature. The Kaiser, careless in his expressions to the British Ambassador, provoked a sharp *démenti* from Lord Salisbury. The Kaiser was furious, and in his next conversation with the British representative he abused both his mortal enemy, Salisbury, and Chamberlain, and declared that neither of them was to be trusted.

In this he greatly wronged Chamberlain, the only British politician who consistently spent (or, as a German I must now unfortunately admit, wasted) many years of his life in trying to bring about an Anglo-German understanding. Chamberlain was not able to utilize for his purposes the official diplomatic machinery which under Salisbury's control maintained in public the English policy of "Splendid Isolation."

Rhodes had returned to London from South Africa, and in virtue of his position as the leading English colonial statesman he undertook to sound German opinion regarding

the recently signed Anglo-German secret agreement. The Kaiser gave him to understand that an Anglo-German understanding might be possible if the English heir-apparent, with whom he had had various personal disputes, would in future adopt towards him a more friendly attitude.

Rhodes, who did not under-estimate the seriousness of the position in South Africa and the diplomatic importance of the still unsolved Anglo-French colonial problems, wrote at once to the Prince of Wales advising him to make his peace with the Kaiser. In view of the many complications in world affairs, Rhodes wrote, England would have to co-operate with one country or another, and Germany appeared the most suitable. Although the Prince was constantly receiving new proofs of his nephew's arrogant tone towards England (see Appendix), he arranged with the German Ambassador in London for the Kaiser and the Kaiserin to visit Windsor and Sandringham in the autumn of 1899. The visit took place at the time of the outbreak of the Boer War. Salisbury was then ill, but most important political conversations took place between the Prince, Chamberlain, Bülow and the Kaiser. In the family circle all was in excellent order, and Chamberlain in his famous speech in Leicester on 29th October 1899, made the first official British offer of an alliance to Germany in the following words:

"No far-seeing English statesman could be content with England's permanent isolation on the continent of Europe . . . The natural alliance is between ourselves and the great German Empire." The differences which had arisen between the two nations, he sanguinely explained, had been "one by one gradually removed" until nothing remained that was likely to cause antagonism. Both interest and racial sentiment united the two peoples, and a new Triple Alliance between Germany, England and the United States would correspond with the sentimental tie that had already bound Teutons and

"ONE WHO KNOWS"

The German Emperor (meditatively). "Now that I'm a British Field-Marshal, I wonder if I might venture to give them a hint or two on 're-organisation'? And I *might* suggest that their officers should always be in uniform—as *mine* are."

From *Punch*, February 13, 1901

Anglo-Saxons together. He attached no dogmatic value to the word "alliance"—"an understanding, a determination to look favourably on the motives of those with whom we desire to be on terms of friendship—a feeling of that kind, cultivated and confirmed by all these three countries" would bring about the millenium quite as well or better.

During the first months of the Boer War, Prince Bülow and other German statesmen expressed their "deepest sympathy with England's heavy losses of men and officers," and outwardly the friendly atmosphere of the last visit to England was maintained. Chamberlain, who was busily organizing the war against the Boers, believed that an Anglo-German agreement had been suitably prepared and would soon be realized.

At the height of England's difficulties in South Africa, the English statesman received the first stab in the back. The British Ambassador in Paris reported to Lord Salisbury, Chamberlain's political adversary, that *The Times* correspondent in Paris had discovered that Germany and Russia had opened negotiations in Paris with the intention of using the Boer war as a pretext to put pressure on England and force her to settle all important outstanding colonial questions affecting these three great Powers and England. He reported to the British Government at the same time that Delcassé had given him the impression that France had not joined the conspiracy, which in his opinion could only have been started by Germany. That the Kaiser must have received a refusal from Delcassé, and that England had therefore reason to be grateful to the French statesman, was evident to the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Frank Lascelles, a few weeks later, when the Kaiser remarked that he hoped England, in her efforts to meet Delcassé, would not allow herself to be persuaded to give up her predominance in the Mediterranean.

Whilst the Kaiser was composing his "military aphorisms," which he put at the disposal of the English royal family as a plan of campaign in South Africa, and whilst, together with his Secretary of State, Mühlberg, he boasted to the English statesmen of having quieted the German Press which had been bribed by the French, Russians and Boers against England, Delcassé had to brave the more serious dangers of the Paris boulevards.

The Prince of Wales avoided untoward incidents and waited patiently for the time when he could again give expressions to his friendly feelings for France. Seldom have far-sighted politicians had to bear a heavier burden of patience than had the Prince of Wales and Delcassé, before, during, and after the Boer War.

# BOOK III

# THE KING OF PARIS

## CHAPTER I

# "THE REST DOES NOT SIGNIFY"

WHEN King Edward, over fifty-nine years of age, came to the throne on 22nd January 1901, the South African War was indeed practically won for England, but his country's political relations with Germany, France and Russia were as unsettled as ever. The only certain fact was that first France, and then Russia, had declined to unite with Germany against England. Further, another revulsion in German policy was noticeable. The Kaiser had been annoyed by the "unreliability" of the Russian Ministers, and was veering round from an anti-English to an anti-Russian disposition. Meetings had taken place between the Kaiser and the King at the deathbed of Queen Victoria and in the castle of the sick Empress Frederick. The Kaiser constantly played the part of the good angel of English politics. It was apparently he alone who, through his strict neutrality, had prevented France and Russia from attacking England during the Boer War.

In Friedrichshof William II declared to the British Ambassador, Sir Frank Lascelles, referring to his wish to keep on good terms with England: "You must understand that all you have to do is to keep me in good humour, the rest does not signify." After this classical expression of a so-called constitutional monarch, the Kaiser made a propaganda speech against the Slavonic danger, which he had recently discovered. The Germanic nations should cleave together in view of the probable, or perhaps inevitable, conflict with the Slavonic nations. To prepare for this conflict every possible precautionary measure should be taken. The Kaiser emphasized the point that it would be his policy to disentangle France

from her alliance with Russia. This would take time, but it would not be impossible. The French were dissatisfied with the separate agreement which Russia had made with China, and they were worried about their large loans to Russia. The memory of Alsace-Lorraine was certainly still alive, but after all it was only "a page of old history." The alliance had been so far weakened as to justify the hope that, should a difference between Slavs and Germans arise, France would no longer be found on the side of the Slavs.

The inconstancy and insincerity of the imperial and official German foreign policy at the turn of the century led Salisbury astray regarding the possibility of reaching an agreement with Germany. Salisbury, who in the meantime had resigned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Lord Lansdowne, and who was also considering retiring from the Premiership, had given the Ambassadors and Ministers a free hand (as is evident from a perusal of the publications of the British Foreign Office) to take soundings with a view to making new connections in other countries. Almost simultaneously soundings were taken in Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Tokyo.

Whilst British diplomats were feeling more and more uneasy regarding England's too complete and too splendid isolation, the King continued to remain noticeably passive. In Wilhelmshohe and Potsdam he discussed with his nephew the possibility of a defensive entente between England and Germany. He informed the Kaiser that his Ministers were negotiating with Japan. Uncle and nephew were for once in exceptional agreement in their strong instinctive dislike of an alliance with a yellow people. The King was only interested in one thing: the greatest possible speeding up of the South African war. Here, contrary to his Ministers, he showed his brilliant mastery of diplomatic technique.

So long as the South African campaign continued, even if only as quite insignificant guerilla warfare, there was

always the possibility of highly undesirable intervention by other Powers. The Czar had already offered himself privately as mediator. The action of British troops in interning Boer women and children in large concentration camps had been sharply criticized, both in the Reichstag and in Parliament, as "methods of barbarism." In his reply, which evoked tremendous indignation in Germany, Chamberlain had compared the German way of making war on the French *francs-tireurs* with England's winding-up of the Boer war. Bülow, by command of the Kaiser, made a sharp retort, and both in England and in Germany it was felt that a pause in the negotiations was advisable.

These events taught the King that, necessary as it was to end England's state of isolation, the friendship of one of the European powers might at the moment be bought too dearly. Only in Asia could England's position be improved without regard to the Boer war, for Japan was beginning to feel the threat of Russia's continuous thrust eastward, and had no inducement to interfere with England in South Africa. Thus the first important foreign treaty of Edward VII's reign was the Anglo-Japanese treaty signed in 1902. How far the King was from any malicious intention towards Germany is indicated by the fact that he instructed Lansdowne to inform Germany at once of the conclusion of the treaty, as there was no question of secrecy, and as the Kaiser had urgently recommended England to enter into a close alliance with Japan.

On the 8th of February, Baron Eckardstein dined with the King, who told the German diplomat that the Kaiser was writing him long letters in which he assured him of his friendship for England. He could not attach much importance to these assurances. The aspersions on England in the German Press, and Bülow's unfriendly expressions in the Reichstag, had so provoked his Ministers and public opinion

that for a long time co-operation between England and Germany could not be contemplated. The King then mentioned that France had expressed a desire to join England in a comprehensive colonial agreement, and that England would probably have to acquiesce as she only desired peace and to live on friendly terms with all other countries. Finally the King declared that he and the majority of his Ministers would have been glad to co-operate with Germany in all colonial and other questions, but that this had not been possible. In all future agreements with other Powers, it would be England's principle to avoid any menace to Germany.

Eckardstein's description of this conversation gives one the impression that it was a surprising revelation to him. The documents of the British Foreign Office prove, however, that Berlin must have known at the end of 1901 that the German-English rapprochement had failed. Germany demanded England's entry into the Triple Alliance. England declined because she neither wished to decide in favour of Italy against France, nor in favour of Austria against Russia. The English policy, more far-sighted than the German, could at that time see the possibility of an agreement with a Russia weakened by troubles with Japan. When Lansdowne, in negotiations with German diplomats, declared that England was not prepared to enter the Triple Alliance but would be glad to consider, instead of the general alliance with Germany, an agreement for a mutual policy on more definite questions, Metternich declared that such a proposal would find no favour with the German Government. England must at once choose between all or nothing.

The nearer the South African War drew to a close, the clearer it must have appeared to the German diplomats that England, after the negotiations with Germany had failed,

was automatically approaching a position more favourable for other political combinations.

The communications of the King to the German diplomat were therefore neither astonishing nor unforeseen. They were, however, of the very greatest importance. Cambon and Chamberlain had also been present at the dinner, and Eckardstein had noticed that these two had withdrawn to an anteroom for half an hour's private conversation. Chamberlain mentioned incidentally to Eckardstein, in referring to a speech of Bülow's, that it was not the first time that Bülow had let him down in the Reichstag. He was tired of such treatment, and so far as he was concerned there was no further question of an alliance between the two countries. Germany had lost her last friend in the English Cabinet.

In spite of England's displeasure at the German monarch's conduct during the Boer War, she took the greatest care in avoiding any double dealing with Germany. This is evident from the fact that, about a year before the historic dinner with King Edward, Cambon had tried in vain to ascertain from Lansdowne, the newly appointed Foreign Minister, the possibility of an Anglo-French Entente. Lansdowne, referring definitely to the extensive Anglo-German negotiations, refused to discuss the matter. Three weeks after the conversation between Edward VII and Eckardstein, Lansdowne suddenly found himself able to discuss the subject which he had previously not cared to mention. Very soon afterwards King Edward and the present King George expressed to Cambon their pleasure that, in a letter to Lansdowne, written at the instigation of Delcassé, he had been able to lay before them a basis for the discussion of an Anglo-French treaty.

CHAPTER II

# THE ASSAULT ON PARIS

DURING 1902, King Edward had to leave the negotiations regarding an understanding with France entirely in the hands of his Foreign Minister, Lansdowne, and of the official Diplomatic service. In the summer, just before the date fixed for the Coronation ceremony, the King fell dangerously ill with an abdominal abscess. Although the operation performed at the eleventh hour was successful, it was months before the sixty-year-old monarch regained his former vitality and mental agility. During his convalescence the reconstruction of the Conservative Cabinet took place, Balfour replacing Salisbury as Prime Minister. Towards the end of 1902 serious internal political struggles were already looming ahead, and as a result of Chamberlain's revival of the tariff controversy these were destined to bring about a second reconstruction of the Government within the year.

Physically not fully equal to his task, the King followed the slow progress of the negotiations with France with growing anxiety, more particularly as the political situation in the Far East had taken an alarming turn. Japan, whose alliance with England had encouraged her in her anti-Russian imperialist policy in the Far East, considered the time had arrived to take up the whole series of Far Eastern questions, and to check Russia's advance towards the Pacific; whilst Russia, allied with France, was looking around for friends, or at least friendly neutrals, in the threatened conflict with Japan. Germany and the United States seemed by no means indisposed to assist Russia, at least to the extent of providing her with funds and munitions. Under these circumstances

the outstanding Anglo-French differences again assumed the character of a lever which could be used by the French Nationalists to exercise political pressure on England during the more important international entanglements, or even to make it practically impossible for England to fulfil its treaty obligations to Japan. At the beginning of 1903, when the negotiations between France and England had practically resulted in a dead-lock, Delcassé was pressed by the French Nationalists to break off these apparently ineffectual negotiations. In France the Foreign Minister was still viewed with distrust by public opinion as the man responsible for the Fashoda retreat, and moreover, he had to live down the prejudice aroused against him in consequence of his refusal to yield to the pro-Boer feelings of the boulevards. In Paris it was rumoured that he was sacrificing important French colonial interests to his obsession for an understanding with England. He was therefore politically in a very difficult position, and the only possibility of continuing the Anglo-French negotiations and bringing them to a successful issue lay in England's making a gesture which would put it under an obligation, and would, at the same time, be of a sufficiently representative character to impress French popular sentiment.

While Delcassé's position in internal politics was gradually weakening, King Edward was preparing for a Mediterranean voyage in order to introduce himself at the Courts of Lisbon and Rome, and to inspect Malta and Gibraltar. He proposed to his Ministers that he should make the return journey to England from the Riviera overland via Paris and, for the first time after many years, pay a visit to that city—this time as King. But Lansdowne scouted the idea and the other Ministers also looked askance at the suggestion. They feared an unfriendly reception and a public demonstration which might damage English prestige all over

the world. But the King overcame the opposition of his advisers by pointing out that he could not compromise England's prestige. As England was already sufficiently hated in France, he could only jeopardize his own. In the end Lansdowne attempted to limit the program as much as he possibly could, and during his conversations with Cambon he merely referred to the possibilities of an "unofficial" visit. Cambon reported to Paris on the King's intentions, and Delcassé, addressing the British Ambassador, Monson, on the subject, asked how the King wished to be received. Monson, who took a very pessimistic view of the French popular temper, telegraphed to the King for instructions, informing him at the same time of his misgivings. He received from the King the characteristic reply that the more honours he received the better it would be, and that he wished his reception to be as official as possible. In this way the spirited sovereign placed his person at the disposal of national policy without regard to his own prestige or attendant risk—and that not for the first time.

The German Ambassador in Paris, Prince Radolin, reported to Prince Bülow that the agitation of the French Nationalists against an Anglo-French alliance was increasing in violence with the approach of the date fixed for the visit of the King of England, but that the visit might possibly ease the strained relations between the English and the French. The reception prepared for the King, although brilliant, would not be accompanied by the same enthusiasm as was shown at the visit of the Czar.

After a most successful Mediterranean tour, the King arrived in Paris on 1st May, and was received at the station by President Loubet and the entire French Cabinet. The King, whose red and gold Field-Marshal's uniform was visible from afar, and made him almost aggressively conspicuous, entered Paris by the side of Loubet. The reception was icy, almost

hostile. Only sullen faces looked on the State carriage, which was entirely surrounded by a specially strong Cuirassier detachment, and the only cries which met the King's ears were "Vive les Boers! Vive Marchand! Vive Fashode!" With the smile of the man of the world and the great sportsman who had seen his favourite horse beaten without moving a muscle of his face, the King returned a military salute to the few (he could almost count them on his fingers) who raised their hats—probably in honour of his neighbour in the civilian suit. The uniformed Englishmen in the following carriages were met with hisses and jeers, but the cortège arrived at the British Embassy without serious incident. The King's entourage commented anxiously on the hostility of the reception and, according to Lee, a Court official declared to the King: "The French don't like us." To which the King replied, without any bitterness: "Why should they?"

Loubet and Delcassé proceeded to the Elysée, full of anxiety and misgivings as to how the visit would progress. An hour had barely elapsed, however, when the King appeared in an ordinary carriage, without military escort or special guard, at the Palais of the President to pay his respects to Mme. Loubet. While the King was absent on this visit, the Board of the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris was summoned to the Embassy. On his return the King delivered to his Paris subjects a speech which he had improvised, not for them but for the Paris evening papers. After a graceful allusion to the happy hours he had spent in Paris during his former visits, the King declared that he was confident that the period of dissensions between the two countries was over. There might have been misunderstandings and causes of dispute in the past, but he believed that all differences of opinion would be removed and forgotten. He was confident that the friendship and admiration which all England felt for France and her glorious traditions would in the very near

future change into a feeling of the warmest friendship and mutual attachment between the two nations. To attain this goal was his unalterable desire.

This gesture of the King had saved Delcassé, but how would the boulevards, under the influence of the Press of the Right, react to it? The King had requested a gala performance at the Théâtre Français for the first evening of his visit, where this time he sat as a man of the world in evening dress in the carefully guarded presidential box. The public, of which about three-quarters were Nationalists opposed to an Anglo-French understanding, preserved a funereal silence on the entrance of the King and the President. During the long interval the King suddenly disappeared from the box, and it was thought that he wished to retire. He did not return, and in the end the French officials were told that he was in the grand foyer, where he greeted old acquaintances, and, in the midst of the circle which had formed round him, he assured an actress that "she embodied for him the whole mentality and esprit of France."

On the following morning there was a great military review at Vincennes. On his way there from the British Embassy the King had to drive through the poorer quarters of Paris, and here he received from the inhabitants, who belonged to the political Left and were pacifist in sentiment, his first hearty ovation. In the afternoon, as the guest of honour of the Nationalist Jockey Club at a race meeting at Longchamps, he once more ventured into the stronghold of his enemies. At the gala dinner in the evening the King emphasized Britain's desire for the friendship of France. When on 4th May, President Loubet called for the King to accompany him in state to the Gare des Invalides, the streets leading to the station were thickly lined by masses of the populace, almost frantic with enthusiasm, and ringing in the

FRIENDS!

His Majesty the King. "See, M. Loubet, he offers you his paw!"

From *Punch,* July 8, 1903

King's ears was the farewell greeting of Republican Paris: "Vive notre Roi."

By his attitude Edward had decided British policy. Those French politicians who were in favour of an understanding with England could refer to the King's unequivocal words as proof of England's readiness to negotiate and come to an understanding. President Loubet informed the British Ambassador that the King's visit would not be devoid of political results, and the *Figaro* published inspired statements by the Foreign Minister and the British Ambassador to the same effect. The Belgian Ambassador in Paris put on record in his report that Edward's efforts had been entirely successful in removing all the misunderstandings which existed between the two countries. Not a word was spoken, he said, not a gesture made which was not adapted to the circumstances and the people concerned. King Edward had won the hearts of all Frenchmen, and such a revulsion of public sentiment had rarely been witnessed. Metternich reported from London that "The visit of King Edward to Paris has been a most odd affair, and, as I know for certain was the result of his own initiative. I am convinced, however, that the English Government, in the approaching reconciliation with France, desires to create no opposition to Germany. Reconciliation with an enemy does not imply quarrelling with a third party. I know, moreover, that the English Government does not wish to break its connection with Berlin, but rather to hold that connection tight."

At the beginning of July, Loubet and Delcassé paid their return visit to London. On this occasion the King, both in his after-dinner speech and his farewell telegram to Loubet, again emphasized England's desire for a rapprochment with France. Meanwhile, history had been made in Lansdowne's office: Lansdowne and Delcassé together had laid down the

first draft, and on 8th April 1904, Lansdowne and Cambon had signed the Entente agreement after its purport had been communicated by Delcassé to the German Ambassador in Paris, Prince Radolin, on 23rd March, that is fourteen days before it was signed.

Germany, as its foreign representatives Eckardstein and Radolin must depose, as crown witnesses, had thus not only been guests at the baptism, but had also had full knowledge of the conception of the Entente. In the Reichstag Prince Bülow stated that from the German point of view no exception could be taken to the Anglo-French convention. It could not be in Germany's interest that strained relations, which might endanger world peace, should subsist between France and England. The British Ambassador in Berlin sent the speech to his King, who wrote in his own hand on the report: "Count Bülow's speech is very satisfactory."

# FRUITS OF VICTORY

THE treaty that Cambon and Lansdowne signed in London on 8th April 1904 was a settlement of mutual colonial interests without any political or military subsidiary clauses. The treaty arranged that age-old causes of disagreement, which had for centuries endangered not only Anglo-French relations but the peace of the whole world, should be disposed of by territorial exchanges and the compensation of interests involved.

There was to be a limitation of interests in West Africa, Siam, Newfoundland, and Polynesia, and in addition the treaty contained an unconditional recognition of England's political mandate in Egypt, in exchange for English disinterestedness in Moroccan affairs. Morocco was, like Egypt, a half-civilized State, and for decades had been the cause of disputes between its neighbours and other interested parties. Whereas England and France had striven for influence in Egypt, partly together and partly in opposition to each other, in Morocco were politically interested primarily France and Spain, and to a less degree England, as possessor of Gibraltar and therefore interested in the neutrality of Tangier.

In the treaty of 1904 England and France had undertaken an exchange of interests on the south coast of the Mediterranean, and this was no secret to the German Foreign Office, as is evident from the speeches of Bülow in the Reichstag; neither was it considered suspicious nor in any degree at variance with Germany's interests, so long as the result of the Russo-Japanese war remained in doubt. The new German attitude to the Anglo-French arrangement was

first apparent after Russia had suffered a crushing defeat in East Asia; and had further so embroiled itself with England about the sinking of the English fishing fleet on the Dogger Bank by the Russian Baltic Sea fleet, that it almost led to war.

The German Government now discovered, in the supposedly anti-German secret paragraphs of the Anglo-French treaty of 8th April, a threat to vital German interests. The Kaiser visited Tangier and in a demonstrative manner he emphasized "The independence of the Sultan of Morocco," and German diplomacy persuaded the Moors to oppose the French measure of reform and expansion and to force the discussion of these French claims at an international conference. Tactically the moment was undoubtedly well chosen. England and Russia had only recently quarrelled, and in 1905 Russia lacked the necessary money, men and munitions to fulfil the obligations she had incurred in her alliance with France.

In going to Tangier the Kaiser's sole intention was to put himself in the limelight, to avenge himself on his uncle for the latter's success in Paris, and finally to annoy the French Foreign Minister Delcassé (who was considered at the German Court to be the originator of the Entente) for having preferred the English to the German advances. In the Wilhelmstrasse the train of thought was probably not quite so superficial. Certain confidential information received, to the effect that the published agreements between England and France contained only a small part of a very much more comprehensive Anglo-French treaty, had raised what was undoubtedly genuine alarm. By taking an interest in Morocco, and by trying to make the new reforms an object of international discussion, the German diplomatists wished to reveal to Europe the actual weakness of the Dual Alliance. They also wished to ascertain how far England would sup-

port France in the assertion of her newly won Moroccan sphere of influence, and further how strong France would deem herself if opposed to Germany without the full military support of Russia.

In discussions in Germany as to the origin of the World War, King Edward has repeatedly been accused of double-dealing, because he had consented to allow certain clauses of the Anglo-French Entente to be kept secret, but it should be noted that these secret clauses had, briefly, the following purport: The first clause of the secret appendix provides that the agreements between England and France on the Suez Canal and the straits of Gibraltar should come into force, even if the published intentions with regard to Egypt and Morocco could not be carried out in their entirety. In the second article England declared that she had no intention of modifying the Capitulations in Egypt. If she should find it necessary to recommend reforms to the Egyptian Government, or if France should wish to do the same in Morocco, then neither England nor France would offer objections to each other's recommendations. Further articles allowed Spain to extend her Moroccan sphere of interest.

It must be positively understood that in these secret articles the contracting parties promised each other no mutual military assistance. In the published treaty only mutual "diplomatic support," relative to Moroccan and Egyptian affairs, is provided for. The Entente was thus, before the German diplomatic offensive, essentially an instrument to remove existing motives for war, but it did not fix the policy of one country in favour of the other to the detriment of third parties. The term "diplomatic support," as every diplomat knew, was very elastic and might be considered fulfilled if England did not oppose a French move in Morocco, and France did not oppose an English move in Egypt.

When the German Government incited Morocco to de-

mand that the French reforms, which amounted practically to the setting up of a French protectorate, should be discussed at an international conference of America and the European countries, most of the Powers declined to attend the Conference unless France were willing to take part in it. Since the German efforts to stir up the Sultan against France depended for their success upon French participation in the Conference, the German Government must perforce drop the Moroccan venture or compel France by diplomatic or military means to attend. When Delcassé with the consent of the majority of his colleagues, refused the invitation, the Germans put to France the alternative of war or attendance at the Conference. Rouvier, doubting the preparedness of the French army, dismissed Delcassé, and taking provisional charge of the Foreign Office, sent representatives to the Conference.

The fall of Delcassé and France's participation in the Algeciras Conference caused great consternation in England. Balfour, the Prime Minister, who had never entirely approved the King's Entente Cordiale policy, remembered his uncle and teacher Lord Salisbury, and he wrote to the King two days after Delcassé's fall: "Delcassé's dismissal or resignation under pressure from the German Government displayed a weakness on the part of France which indicated that she could not at present be counted on as an effective force in international politics. She could no longer be trusted not to yield to threats at the critical moment of a negotiation. If, therefore, Germany is really desirous of obtaining a port on the coast of Morocco, and if such a proceeding be a menace to our interests, it must be to other means than French assistance that we must look for our protection."

The King rightly considered that the time to test the value of friendship was not in good but in evil days. He asked Bal-

four to discuss and to draw up in the Cabinet a distinct English policy. Balfour, still doubtful as to whether French policy had a conscious objective, advocated keeping to the terms of the treaty which expressly defined Morocco as a French sphere of influence; and that at the Conference England should conform her attitude to the French initiative. The King, who feared that a too great reserve on the part of the English Government might jeopardize the fruits of his policy, himself took the initiative.

An English fleet, whose flagship bore the winning name of Edward VII, visited Brest, and a French Fleet visited Portsmouth. In order to leave no doubt in France as to England's loyalty, the King declined with finality bordering on rudeness all German suggestions to visit Kaiser William II on his journey to Marienbad, or on his way back to England. The Kaiser commented to the Czar on his uncle's refusal as follows: "The British have prostituted themselves before France and the French sailors in the hopes of gaining them over from you, and stopping any rapprochement between you, me and them. The French feel much flattered, but I hope that sensible people have kept their heads cool and clear and seen all is *cousu de fil blanc* and that Britain only wants to make France her 'catspaw' against us, as she used Japan against you."

This attitude did not further the Kaiser's policy. Immediately before the meeting of the Conference the King sent for Cambon and said to him: "Tell us what you wish on each point, and we will support you without restriction or reserves." Sir Arthur Nicholson, a confidential friend of the King, was sent as head of the English delegation. The German delegate, Count Tattenbach, stated in his report that the English "were more French than the French." With regard to the Conference the King wrote: "Germany forced

the Conference on France and has never once attempted to conciliate or meet her in the views which she was bound to put forward. . . . Germany's interest lay in France's humiliation and loss."

CHAPTER IV

# CABINET CHANGES

WHEN the German Foreign Office decided to test the inner strength of Germany's neighbours in 1905, not only England's world policy but also her domestic situation played a decisive part. Chamberlain's retirement and the violent quarrels over Ireland and the fiscal policy rendered Balfour's Cabinet almost impotent. The ratification of the Entente was the last of the important acts of the Cabinet. At most of the Cabinet meetings in 1905 the discussions were practically confined to home politics, and the right moment to dissolve and to arrange for new elections. The splits in the Conservative ranks might have justified any foreign observer in hoping that the Liberals would succeed the Conservatives in power. In Europe the Liberals were considered at that time to be not very friendly disposed towards France, to be pacifists and therefore on the whole opponents of the course pursued in foreign politics by Balfour's Ministry.

Whilst the Balfour Cabinet was doubtful of its own vitality and of its power to win another election, most critical negotiations were taking place in Paris and Berlin on the question of the program of the Algeciras Conference. The initiative of the King, which gave a definite meaning to the expression "diplomatic support," was therefore all the more remarkable, and in France it was all the more warmly welcomed because England's political conflicts at home had evoked in Paris some uncertainty as to the continuity of her foreign policy. When Balfour resigned on 8th December 1905, and was succeeded by Campbell-Bannerman, a stroke of luck helped to secure this continuity. Campbell-Bannerman was a Radical Scot who had evoked the King's

disfavour during the South African War by denouncing the internment of Boer women as "barbaric methods of warfare," but later the two were reconciled, both personally and politically. Both loved France and spoke its language fluently. King and Prime Minister had the same preference for French literature, and in Marienbad, where they annually went for a cure for similar troubles of old age, they both preferred the society of Frenchmen.

As successor to Lansdowne, Campbell-Bannerman first proposed Lord Cromer, the English Resident in Egypt, who had already figured prominently in the negotiations with France over the Entente. When Cromer refused, the choice fell on the Liberal Imperialist Sir Edward Grey, godchild of the King and son of one of his deceased adjutants. The King, who had known Grey from his babyhood, approved of the appointment.

That the first offer was made to Cromer and not to Grey, although Grey, as he was *persona grata* with the King and also Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Gladstone's Ministry (1892–1895), should have had the first claim to the position, is significant of certain personal doubts which Campbell-Bannerman and the King must have harboured.

To understand these doubts one should bear in mind that Campbell-Bannerman's political career was made in home politics. The new Liberal Premier, already on the verge of the biblical age, would feel a more urgent need of a strong Foreign Secretary than Balfour, who could at will understudy his Foreign Secretary, as he had had extensive experience of foreign affairs whilst working with his uncle, Lord Salisbury, from the time of the Berlin Congress, whilst at the same time Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary until 1903, had also considerable knowledge of Foreign politics. Lansdowne, who had been Under Secretary Governor-General

THE POLITICAL ANCIENT MARINER

" 'God save thee, Ancient Mariner,
From the fiends that plague thee thus!
Why look'st thou so?'—'With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross!' "
—Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

From *Punch*, February 1, 1905

of Canada, and Viceroy of India before he became a Minister, was a great statesman who was not only familiar with current questions of foreign politics and knew how to handle them with perfect technique, but he also understood how to maintain the connection between foreign and imperial politics. Grey's twelve years of office as British Foreign Minister, and the many psychologically interesting proofs of his peculiar characteristics which have been revealed during the past five years, seem entirely to justify Campbell-Bannerman's modest estimation of his abilities.

All that could be said with certainty of Grey when first he took office was that, within the Liberal Party, which had been in opposition for ten years, he had interested himself in European political questions, and that with regard to imperial affairs, being an adherent of the right wing of the Party led by Asquith, he could be looked upon as a "reliable man." During the Boer war, for instance, he had, contrary to Lloyd George and Campbell-Bannerman, refused to listen to any criticism of the manner in which England was conducting the war, and in his speeches he had advocated that it should be vigorously carried on to an early and successful issue.

The fact that Grey had led a completely insular existence, that he knew no foreign languages and would therefore be completely dependent on his Ambassador's reports and on the information of his permanent Under Secretary, counted in Campbell-Bannerman's mind against his being entrusted with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. But this deficiency in his knowledge might not have been so serious from the point of view of national policy if he had had any simple, clear policy of his own to expound, such as would have been the case with Haldane, Cromer, or Lloyd George. In the Liberal Party the specialist in foreign politics was an amiable, sensitive man of letters, who was only happy during the few

hours of the week-end when he could lie on his back in a wood and listen to and pick out the voices of different birds. No wonder then that, even during his first years of office as helper of a King who, although very ill, was yet very sure as to his aims and objects, Grey was not entirely suited for his post. The physical and mental characteristics of Grey, which apparently militated against his being called to the Foreign Ministry in December 1905, were aggravated by the serious political situation in England, the numerous and ever-growing complications abroad, the failing powers of the King, and the strain of his work as Foreign Minister; and for these, of course, he cannot be blamed.

To appreciate his difficulties we must consider impartially the tremendous personal disadvantages which he had to overcome. Not only his predilections, but also his nervous constitution made him really antipathetic to the position he occupied. The Cabinet in which he was Foreign Minister was formed in a clumsy attempt to include every shade of opinion in the Liberal Party, which had suddenly become powerful. Campbell-Bannerman was a lovable representative of the radical left wing. He was of a conciliatory disposition, and he tried to square the circle by filling the important positions in his Cabinet either with the wrong people, or with fossils who had to be cleared out after a couple of years. The real personalities in the Party, the men who were capable of giving a general driving force to the great Liberal majority, were fobbed off with minor positions. Where history and world politics were concerned, Haldane was the best brain in the Cabinet, and after Cromer he had the first claim to the position of Foreign Minister—if we consider intellect as the most important qualification for the Foreign Ministry of a World Empire—but he became War Minister. Bryce, the historian and diplomatic genius of the Cabinet, was made Minister for Ireland. Lloyd George went to the Board of

Trade, and Churchill, as Under Secretary, to the Colonial Office, whilst Rufus Isaacs (afterwards Lord Reading) and Herbert Samuel were indifferently placed in still less important posts.

The Foreign Minister in this Cabinet had a well-nigh impossible task. He had to defend "his" policy—if he ever had one—on three fronts. To keep Asquith quiet the Empire must be vigorously governed, whilst to satisfy Lloyd George and Churchill economy must be effected in every department. Foreign policy must first of all be continuous, secondly and simultaneously pacifist, and thirdly economical. As soon as it developed some definite character it was not continuous, or not pacifist enough, or it was too expensive. Only a big man, sure of his goal, could have directed his own policy against these various currents in the Cabinet. But Grey never had a policy of his own during his period of office. He had inherited from Gladstone and Rosebery, and even from Palmerston, a number of traditions which he refreshed with a sauce of peace and goodwill towards men. For the rest, he confined himself to a clumsy attempt to uphold the foreign political position bequeathed to him by Lansdowne: to maintain the Entente and the Alliance with Japan. The King won him over to a political understanding with Russia, and the majority of his Party were anxious to bring about, for reasons of economy, a naval holiday with Germany.

All these yawning contradictions revealed themselves whenever a special activity on the part of England with regard to foreign policy was required. Grey did not realize that, as far as army expenses were concerned, a "cheap" foreign policy was only possible if at the same time a vigorous peace policy was pursued, a policy which could, under certain circumstances, be imposed on neighbours and friends. A further contradiction, unnoticed by Grey, was the fact that only a

strong England, capable of taking vigorous measures, could bring about an understanding with Russia, which would be a lasting security for peace. He could not perceive that there was but little prospect of a naval understanding with Germany when there was no unity within his own Cabinet on the question of the definite size of the English naval building program; and in the Kaiser's circles it was therefore an easy matter for all exponents of a big German fleet to counsel a dilatory policy—which in England was not regarded as sincere—in the hope that English political opponents of a strong British fleet would exert such pressure on the apparently by no means representative British Foreign Minister, that the numerical proportion for both fleets would be fixed at a number which might be particularly favourable for Germany.

After 1906 every decision of the English Cabinet on foreign policy was a compromise which did not heighten the country's prestige abroad; and in each of these compromises politicians who were not primarily responsible either to Parliament or to the public for the conduct of foreign affairs were more directly concerned than was the Foreign Minister himself. If we analyse psychologically Grey's great speeches on foreign policy from 1906 to 1914, it becomes obvious that, often in their most important sections, they are merely patchwork, and their lack of uniformity proves that the contents of a speech and the personality of its deliverer stood at no direct relation to each other. If these speeches were now, *post factum,* laid before the most prominent living witnesses of those inter-Party conflicts in the Liberal Cabinet, Lloyd George and Churchill, it would probably not be difficult for them to mark in blue and red those lines of thought which Grey had incorporated, on their proposal or at the behest of Asquith, Haldane, or Morley, in the substance of his speeches.

Conciliatory by nature, and without a definite guiding

peace-policy, Grey not only entered into a compromise on subjects that were to him remote, but even on questions on which perhaps he had an opinion of his own he allowed his conclusions to be modified. In one question only had Grey the support of Campbell-Bannerman and later, to a full extent, also of Asquith, and that was in the upholding of the Entente with France. In all other fundamental problems Grey had to some extent intelligently to anticipate what would be the view of the Cabinet, or allow the opinion of a chance majority, which often enough veered round a number of times on the same question in the course of a few weeks, to decide his course. The ever-changing attitude of the majority of the Cabinet on foreign affairs would have driven a man of sterner stuff and greater force than Grey into demanding a vote of confidence within a year of his taking office; and would thereby have imposed on this forum, which was chiefly governed by domestic considerations, his program or resigned his office. On all the statesmen of the years immediately preceding the War lies some share of the blame for it, because they were not great enough to counter, each through his own powerful policy, the forces driving them into war. In Grey's lack of a discernible goal lies his share of the blame.

All the Liberal politicians and Ministers who in the Liberal era of English politics in the twentieth century were capable of suggesting a policy of their own, and had strong enough characters to pursue it with prospects of success at home and abroad but let things drift, were jointly responsible for the war. But so far as Grey was concerned, his guilt was more of an objective than a subjective character, for the self-criticism of this hyper-sensitive man was not sufficiently deep to give him a clear perception of his own limitations. Instead of engaging in an honourable struggle within the Party for a predominating influence on foreign policy, the

younger members of the Cabinet especially, and Lloyd George and Churchill in particular, were prepared to be satisfied if, like Chamberlain in Salisbury's Cabinet, they had the opportunity of strengthening their positions in home politics by sensational speeches on foreign political questions. Doubtless Grey's uncertainty as representative of British "official" foreign policy arose from the fact that every step he took on his own responsibility might be "brilliantly illuminated" by one of the *enfants terribles* of the Cabinet. With the applause of the gallery, and probably in a sense which he himself had not intended, they might emphasize unimportant points and upset his calculated acoustic effects. And so, in order to reduce the possibilities of disturbance by his more active colleagues to a minimum, Grey decided that he would rather anticipate in his speeches what the hotspurs wished to say about foreign affairs, although it might neither suit his point of view nor his temperament, so that the rhetorical explosions of the "temperaments" in the Cabinet might be discounted by European public opinion. He could thus meet diplomats who demanded an explanation with the plea that the speeches of the more temperamental Cabinet Ministers were after all only popularized versions of his own carefully "weighed" words.

In German war propaganda Grey was often called a "sticker." That is the only reproach which cannot justly be flung at him. In the Foreign Ministry he undoubtedly sacrificed himself both physically and mentally for the unity of his Party, and as he still believes, for his country's good. In questions of foreign politics he knew how to preserve Party unity, but it was at the expense of his country's prestige and of an individual and firm policy in political world crises, which occurred in an almost unbroken series during his period of office.

Grey's peculiar relations with his colleagues were not with-

out repercussions on his official attitude towards the King. In his intercourse with Lansdowne, and even before that, when he gave advice to his mother's Ministers or put before them foreign political proposals, the King was accustomed to a definite routine. He developed his point of view of the appropriate action in the course of a conversation with, or in a letter to, the responsible Minister, and promptly received a reply in which the Minister concerned would either signify his substantial agreement with the King, or, by developing his or his Government's point of view, he would show clearly why the King's idea could not be adopted. Grey was not the man to advise the King in that clear and expeditious manner so particularly agreeable to his monarch. Clear-cut simple suggestions of the King were met by ponderous but probably, to the King's mind, not very convincing objections, or by answers that conveyed the impression that the expert minister had not yet made up his mind to a definite "yes" or "no." This uncertainty of the Foreign Minister often made the King hesitate to follow his advice, and more than once, especially during the period when the agreement with Russia was being prepared, the King gave practical expression to his preference for the proposals of the permanent Under Secretaries and Colonial Governors, which seemed to him more calculated to preserve the continuity of British policy than did the views of the Foreign Minister.

Until the Liberal Government took office, the King, his Ministers, and the permanent officials of the Foreign Office had all expressed the same views to foreign diplomats. Any foreign student of British foreign policy would receive the same unequivocal reply to any question he might advance as to the country's political aims. But this unanimity disappeared when Grey was appointed to the Foreign Office. Foreign envoys in London took great pains in their despatches to differentiate clearly as to whether Grey had expressed his

own personal view, which was often by no means binding for England, whether he was the exponent of a new political idea of the King, or whether the influence of Lloyd George, Churchill, or Haldane could be detected in his statement. The foreign diplomats were kept very busy speculating on the frequent waxing and waning of the influence of these three Liberal politicians on British foreign policy. They speculated on the differences between the King's attitude, the Government's policy of compromise—which was only occasionally consistent, and which Grey represented with an entire lack of enthusiasm—and the "revelations calculated to appeal to the soul of the English people" of the "coming men," Lloyd George and Churchill.

If the foreign diplomats supposed that, behind the various shades of difference in the oratorical representation of British policy, there were deep-seated differences of opinion which might prove irreconcilable at a critical moment, they were greatly mistaken. They were deceived because they failed to observe that in the English system of government a transference of real power was taking place. The more patchy the speeches and the conduct of the politicians, the greater became the power behind the scenes of the permanent officials and of the military and naval expert advisers of the changing Ministers. The influence of these factors on policy is best illustrated by the ministerial career of the brilliant lawyer and philosopher, Haldane. By education and personal inclination predestined for the work of bringing about an Anglo-German understanding, Haldane urged again and again, both in the Cabinet and in representations to the King, the importance of a firm and clear policy in this field. Campbell-Bannerman, anxious to avoid being suspected of allowing the Radical Scot to wield too great an influence in his Cabinet, tried to rid himself of the clever lawyer by entrusting him with the administration of the War Office, in the secret hope that the

stiff-necked and proud civilian would break himself on Kitchener and on the passive opposition of the Guards, who were particularly influential in the House of Lords.

It is now too late academically to discuss the question as to whether the World War might have been avoided if, instead of the nervous Grey, shrinking from every responsibility, Haldane, with his strength of character and his honest willingness to understand Germany, had been British Foreign Minister. The ideas of the King, instead of being administered mechanically and without imagination by Sir Edward Grey, might then have been carried out during his life, but more especially after his death, with sovereign mastery. Haldane was by no means confounded by the task imposed upon him of creating a capable professional army which could form the nucleus of Kitchener's three-million British national army of 1915. As the King took a lively interest in army reforms, Haldane was, next to Grey, the personality in the new Cabinet which came into the closest personal contact with him. The two men quickly became friends and they worked together in the greatest harmony. They were entirely agreed that England, in the event of a European conflict, could only make the most of her full political power if she had an army which, though not big enough to be regarded as a threat, could be quickly mobilized, and which could seize and hold a continental position of decisive importance for the assertion of British authority in the world. Belgium, Denmark, the French Channel coast and, before the reconciliation with Russia, the Dardanelles or Norway were recognized as being such positions of strategic importance. England dared not allow them to fall into the hands of a great power which by gaining a foothold there could launch a flank attack or threaten England's lines of communication.

It was a tragic consequence of the Liberal policy of com-

promise that Haldane, probably the greatest intellect in the Cabinet, was forced to include in the routine of his political calculations all those cases in which British foreign *policy* might prove incapable of safeguarding England's position in the world *without resort to arms*. Haldane thus found himself in the position that, although he had never had the practical experience of testing foreign policy in diplomatic action, he had come to understand all foreign political problems through the views of conservative non-political military attachés abroad, and not from the favourable point of view of a peace policy. In order not to give the *enfants terribles* too much material for "special turns," Grey, that nervous pedlar of secrets, constantly gave his colleagues only such information about the diplomatic situation as was already more or less publicly known. So Haldane worked under the suggestion—doubly dangerous for his cool nature, which was particularly well adapted to the working up of facts—of all the representations, partly correct and partly wildly exaggerated by his military informers, as to the "maximum risk" of anti-British armaments and political combinations.

The assumption is undoubtedly justified that, if the King desired information as to the accuracy of the actual facts underlying Grey's advice or proposals in foreign affairs, he generally discussed them, from the standpoint of the country's safety, with Haldane and with Admiral Sir John Fisher. Haldane, who had the makings of a great peace politician, shared with his King an extremely sensitive conscience regarding the duties of the individual within the bounds of the English constitutional system. The King and Haldane talked much and often together, and today there exists no doubt, according to the statements of all their contemporaries, that the wise Scotsman thought it his duty to elucidate foreign political situations to his Sovereign, primarily from the point of view of the War Office. Haldane's budget

in the English Cabinet was always cut down rigorously—quite as much in order to keep quiet the advocates of a big Fleet as the "economy fanatics," who were always particularly severe on expenditure for armaments—and he was forced to take up this attitude by the personal consideration that in the King, who was specially interested in the Army, he often found his last support when his Army Budget was threatened too severely.

During the first years of his reign the King was for a long time hampered diplomatically because of the lack of organization in the British army, which had been responsible for the long duration of the South African War, and for this reason, if for no other, he supported his new, capable War Minister. On the other hand, Haldane only succeeded in persuading the King to support his by no means aggressive military "minimum demands" by using effectively the information regarding foreign armaments which he secured from his confidential military advisers abroad. During the King's last years he became more pessimistic and more sensitive to the development of anti-British political feeling abroad, and his impressions of the "armament dangers," which had already been suggested by Sir John Fisher, were strengthened through Haldane's influence. The reserved, cautious judgment of the prudent Scottish lawyer was highly valued by the King, and when Haldane confirmed Fisher's conjectures and apprehensions—if only to the extent of 75 per cent. —they immediately became of enormous importance in the mind of the King.

Grey's lack of grip, the irresolute naval policy of the Liberal Cabinet (to which I shall refer in another chapter), and Haldane's political isolation in a department whose intelligence service from abroad always assumed in its every objective and train of thought the failure of diplomacy, and never envisaged the successful accomplishment of a peace

policy—all these things combined to give the King's policy a more defensive character than it had had in the first years of his reign and during his "occasional political activity" as heir-apparent. If the King's policy whilst he was heir to the throne and during the first years of his reign was actively directed towards securing for England an unassailable position, thereby incidentally securing the peace of the world, towards the end of his life his policy sounded a stronger defensive note, and was actuated to a greater degree by dangers of the hour. The King considered that the country's defence and foreign policy were not so strongly upheld by a Liberal Cabinet, subject to differences of opinion and violent dissensions, as by a Conservative Cabinet backed by a strong Conservative parliamentary majority, which would always put the interests of the Empire before domestic and tactical considerations; and he included in his political calculations not only current questions, but also the possibility of the "war of the future," which was at that time widely discussed in military circles and used as a basis for much literary activity in England and on the Continent. The more time and attention the King paid to these questions and the less he felt able to depend upon the judgment of his political counsellors, the more accessible was he to the reports of the "anxious experts." He considered it not only his duty to pursue and to bring nearer to materialization those political aims which were dictated by his unusually sound political instinct, but he increased his already numerous activities by a careful study of all those potentialities which experts, friends, and Ministers outlined as "eventual dangers" for England and the Empire.

The ageing and ailing King was more open to these influences after Campbell-Bannerman, whom he liked well and who was completely at one with him in his opinion of the Anglo-French Entente, had been succeeded by Asquith, who

was only an expert on domestic politics. Asquith was the son of a small Yorkshire farmer. He was a self-made man without traditions, who had won his spurs as a lawyer rather than as a politician, and the King felt entirely unsympathetic towards him. This pedantic lawyer seemed to the King to be the embodiment of those small-souled, bigoted provincials who had pronounced censorious judgment on his youth and carped at the pleasures of his riper manhood, without understanding the human needs that had driven him behind the scenes at the theatres, to the racecourses, and to the casinos of continental watering places. From the moment he took office, Asquith had in the clumsiest manner aggravated the King's dislike of him. When Campbell-Bannerman's health gave way, the King, during the worst part of the English winter, was himself lying seriously ill at Biarritz. British constitutional tradition ordains that a member of the House of Commons, when commissioned to form a Cabinet, must be personally received by the King. Campbell-Bannerman sent his resignation to Biarritz, and Asquith was charged with the formation of a new Cabinet. According to ancient constitutional custom the English Prime Minister must be appointed by the King on English ground, but in the opinion of his doctors the King was then quite incapable of undertaking the journey home. So Asquith went to Biarritz to kiss hands, and on his return did nothing to prevent *The Times,* which was always in close contact with the Government of the day, and the official Liberal weekly organ, *The Nation,* from blaming the King for deviating from the traditional course in order that his comfort might not be interfered with. Because of his great love for his country, the King had given strict instructions to his doctors not to issue public bulletins as to his condition, for he desired that no doubt should arise in Russia as to his intentions to attend, six weeks later, the world famous meeting with the Czar in the roadstead at

Reval, which should seal the Anglo-Russian understanding in the eyes of the world; and although Asquith was aware of all this, he never contradicted the damaging reports. It is no wonder that a Prime Minister, who could not protect his King from the wholly undeserved reproach of having slighted the Constitution, should never enjoy his confidence. So little confidence had the King in his Prime Minister that, soon after Asquith's appointment, he initiated his scheme for a naval agreement with Germany outside the machinery of official diplomacy or Cabinet policy, through the medium of his close friend, Sir Ernest Cassel, who acted as substitute for both diplomats and Ministers.

CHAPTER V

# THE MÉTIER OF A KING

## I

### THE SLAVE OWNER OF THE CONGO

As a proof of its "theory of encirclement," official German propaganda attached great importance to certain reports from Belgian Ambassadors, which were discovered in the archives of the Belgian Foreign Ministry after the entry of the German Army into Brussels in the first year of the War. These reports—recording feelings rather than facts—gave the impression that King Edward undertook all his journeys as a Sovereign with no other intention than to bring about aggressive coalitions against Germany. Diplomats of every monarchy are also courtiers and, at least in the reports destined for the monarch's perusal, they try to report what they think their rulers wish to read. The Belgian Ambassadors were no exception to this rule. They were not only courtiers, but also to some extent they were King Leopold's companions in doubtful adventures and still more doubtful money transactions. If they wished to receive their share of the winnings in the Congo transactions or to retain the confidence of their King, who was as fickle as he was crafty, they must be prepared not only to provide new inmates for the harem in his castle in Laeken, but also to furnish unfavourable reports about the relative with whom he was on particularly bad terms—his English cousin.

King Edward's recollections of his last visit to Brussels in the year 1900 were not very pleasant. A young anarchist of the name of Sipido had shot at the Prince and Princess of Wales in the Brussels railway station. The Belgian police at

first allowed him to escape. After vigorous British protests King Leopold, accompanied by several private detectives, went himself to Paris, to search the "underworld," where he was particularly well known, for the criminal who was supposed to be in hiding there.

It was in order to placate his angry cousin that King Leopold undertook this hunt for the criminal in the Apache quarter in Paris. King Edward was of the opinion that the dissolute life which the King of the Belgians was leading and the unworthy way in which he treated his daughters might lower the respect for all crowned heads in Europe. His disapproval culminated in an open break when the King of the Belgians, who had come to take part in Queen Victoria's funeral ceremonies, not only brought his mistresses to England but, both before and after the funeral, behaved himself in the most unseemly way in the public pleasure haunts of London. For King Edward, who was certainly no puritan, there was only one crime: to indulge in vulgar enjoyment to the annoyance of others. Immediately after his ascent to the throne, King Edward requested the Prime Minister, Salisbury, to inform the Belgian Court that after King Leopold's unseemly behaviour at his mother's funeral, he would never again receive the Belgian monarch.

King Edward kept his word. All attempts at reconciliation on the part of the Belgian Court and Ministers were rejected. He supported the English agitation over the Congo horrors against his royal cousin. In a letter to the British Ambassador in Brussels he explained the position in the following way:

> "The Congo question is not altogether a private matter, but is largely a political and public one, on which everybody in England has expressed an unanimous and strong opinion. In this opinion His Majesty entirely agrees with

his subjects, and it is certainly not one which is favourable either to the King of the Belgians or to his Ministers. No doubt exists in the minds of the British public, and I believe also of the British Government, that great cruelties have been committed in the Belgian Congo territory, and the question is so far a private one that the King of the Belgians is held to be in a great measure responsible for them, at all events to the extent that, if he had really wished it, he could have taken steps to mitigate these cruelties, even if he were unable to put an entire stop to them.

"The King cannot therefore feel attracted towards a Sovereign, whether he is a relative or not, who, he considers, has neglected his duty towards humanity."

This attitude King Edward maintained firmly, even when his own Government and the French insisted on the importance of his personal co-operation in bringing about a closer Anglo-Belgian relationship. The desire for this arose in the Cabinets of London and Paris, when the Ambassadors in Brussels reported that the German Kaiser was actively bestirring himself, in the year 1905, to effect a rapprochement with the only personal enemy of the English King. The Kaiser had written to the Czar that he expected, among other things, that Belgium would also join a Russo-German-French alliance. The English King's antipathy to the Belgian King and nation was not shaken even when Clemenceau, in 1908, pointed out to Edward that in the event of a German invasion the want of co-operation between the English and Belgian armies would expose the French flank, for Germany would begin her attack on France through Belgium.

In the years during which the Entente with France and Russia was in preparation, relations between England and Belgium were so bad that one may well give credence to the

assurances of British statesmen that there was no political significance in the visits of British staff officers to Belgium, and that their only object was to work out the strategic and technical transport problems of a British expeditionary force, should an eventual violation of Belgian neutrality occur.

It was only after the death of King Leopold on 17th December 1909—and indeed but ten days after this event—that the English King sent a confidential note to the British Ambassador in Brussels, in which he pointed out that "no time should be lost in the resumption of the old friendly relations between the Belgian and the British Courts," and he hoped "that better feelings between the two countries would take the place of the mutual suspicion and irritation now prevailing, mainly owing to the question of the Congo." The British Ambassador informed the King by return of post that "at this Court there exists the strongest wish to resume friendly relations with England, not only for personal but also for political reasons."

The friction between the English and the Belgian Kings furnishes the psychological explanation of the malicious remarks about the English King contained in the Belgian ambassadorial reports. It explains, in letters never intended by their writers for public perusal, the personal, political, and, so far as the nations were concerned, temperamental estrangement, which prevented any military or political co-operation on a treaty basis against a third party. The fact that English and Belgian officers, who kept up social relations and amused themselves by discussing the problems of the defence of Belgium, guaranteed also by England, in the same free manner that German and British flying officers discussed "as comrades," at the Hendon display, the technical possibilities of an aerial defence of London, by no means signified that Belgium would go over to the Entente, or that the guaranteed Belgian neutrality would lapse.

## 2

### THE MURDER IN BELGRADE

On 10th June 1903, the Serbian King and Queen and members of the Cabinet were murdered by Serbian officers. England broke off diplomatic relations with Belgrade, and King Peter, who had been called to the throne, was given to understand that England would only resume relations if he banished from the capital the officers who had taken part in the deed and who had been given high offices at Court.

King Peter, a favourite of the Czar of Russia and brother-in-law of the Queen of Italy, relied upon his good relations with these great Powers to prevent England from enforcing her demand. He sent a telegram to the English King in which he asked for recognition. In his reply King Edward expressed the hope that King Peter would succeed in re-establishing his country's good name, which had been sullied by late events.

As King Peter could not persuade England to resume diplomatic relations, he induced the rulers of Russia and Italy to authorize their London Envoys to make a joint request to the English King. To the representations of the Envoys, who solicited a joint audience at Windsor, King Edward replied that he much regretted not being able to act on their suggestion. The murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga was so terrible that it had made a deep impression on public opinion in England. "Public opinion has not yet recovered from the shock, and would certainly not approve of a re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Serbia; and you know well that I and my Government must take into account the public opinion of our country, and besides this reason, I have another, and, so to say, a personal reason. '*Mon métier à moi est d'être Roi.* King Alexander was also by his *métier* "*un Roi.*" ' As you see, we belonged to the same guild,

as labourers or professional men. I cannot be indifferent to the assassination of a member of my profession, or if you like, a member of my guild. We should be obliged to shut up our business if we, the kings, were to consider the assassination of kings as of no consequence at all. I regret, but you see that I cannot do what you wish me to do."

Diplomatic relations with Serbia were only resumed on the 13th June 1906, after the officers who had been the leaders in the plot against the assassinated King and Queen had been removed from the Court.

CHAPTER VI

# SOCIETY AND FAMILY

THOSE who did not know the elegant jovial heir to the English throne, and who only watched him at Epsom as he led his Derby winners, Diamond Jubilee, Persimmon and Minoru to the scales, might have thought that the public and the social life of the Prince of Wales had become almost without modification his daily work as King. For sport, art, music, opera, and all the important functions of the London season, the King showed the same interest as he had done as heir-apparent. As the country gentleman at Sandringham, the racehorse owner, the proud father and grandfather, he always had time for other interests, which appealed to his human rather than his royal qualities.

England experienced a decade of tremendous social brilliance because the King, it was said, had more time than other monarchs to spend on social intercourse, Court functions, and visits to the country-seats of the nobility. He visited Homburg, Paris, Biarritz and the Riviera regularly. Spiteful gossip would have it that "adventures" were the real purpose of many of his journeys. They talked of the King who "could not grow old," and who was apparently so superficial that the Entente with France was only arranged because the King wished to create in France such a friendly feeling for himself and for England as would enable him to make frequent visits to that country.

There was only one thing that astonished the intimates of the King and Government circles, and that was his perfect knowledge of every domestic and foreign political question of importance for England, and how he took it amiss if any

important information was withheld, or if he first learned of an important Government decision from the newspapers.

His physicians could solve the riddle of the King's all-round knowledge of affairs more easily than could the outside world. Although advanced in years, he was leading a double life, physically and mentally. Outwardly he was, above all, the first gentleman of the country, who thought it his duty to be present wherever Society met. Proud of the dominant position which as heir-apparent he had already won among the English nobility and in London Society, which assumed a more and more international character, he was not willing after he ascended the throne, even when he felt tired and knew that his strength was beginning to wane, to renounce the outward splendour of his position and lead a hermit's life as his mother had done.

While he allowed sport and social activities to make exorbitant demands on his time and bodily strength, the King's duties as a Sovereign, after the change of Cabinet, became increasingly complicated and strenuous. After Campbell-Bannerman's Liberal Cabinet took office, he himself was the sole embodiment of the continuity of British foreign and Empire policy. The Liberals, who in opposition had had to wait so long for their opportunity, wanted to make the appointments not only to seats in the Ministry, but also to positions at Court. It was suggested to the King that he should accept for positions in his household, ambitious and rich adherents of the Liberal Party, with whom he often had absolutely nothing in common, either personally or with regard to world affairs.

Thus, after his accession, the King's social activity became an enforced keeping up of appearances, increasing year by year, while his real duties as ruler became more numerous and his burden of responsibility ever more oppressive. In Sir Sidney Lee's biography of the King, a pathetic scene is

described. The King had invited an old friend to an after-dinner chat. At midnight the guest, a man of about the same age as the King, grew tired and received his permission to take his leave. He said good-night to the King, who pointed laughingly to the numerous red leather despatch boxes from his Ministers which were piled up on his writing-table, and said that it was only in the silence of the night that a politician's undisturbed working-day could begin.

For light, diverting adventures the conscientious King had neither time nor strength. His former friends gave place to a few wise and noble women, who in the last two decades of the King's life were able for years to keep their places in his circle by force of their personality, sincere comradeship, and understanding of his difficult task.

After the South African War, England's position became so difficult that the King had no need for artificial excitement and outlet for his energy. The political crises of his country demanded the whole of his forces, and the great sportsman turned into the elderly gentleman, elegant rather by principle than by inclination, fond of his comforts, and happy if before going to bed he could play with his friend, Sir Ernest Cassel, a rubber of bridge without being interrupted by Ministers' reports or urgent despatches. The King's remark about the German Kaiser, when the latter had particularly annoyed him by his fancifulness and unreliability, was very characteristic: "I hope we can teach him bridge next time we meet."

During the last ten years of his life, the King was ordered by his physicians to go every year to Marienbad for a cure, to spend a few weeks in Biarritz in the early spring, and to cruise in his yacht in the Mediterranean during April and May. From the end of May till the beginning of the shooting season in Scotland, he was occupied almost incessantly with the social duties of his country. In the autumn and winter,

if the political situation allowed it, he could recover from his social engagements and official journeys at his country seat, Sandringham, where model settlements which he himself managed had been developed. Sandringham was the centre of royal family life. Here the King was the Providence-playing squire, and the grandfather meekly submitting to the orders of his grandchildren. At Sandringham, where they had begun their more personal married life, the King and Queen, who for reasons of health had often to undertake simultaneous journeys with different destinations, could stay together for considerable periods.

The King and Queen, who were by nature both free, proud beings, were wholeheartedly agreed that the mistakes which had poisoned Edward VII's youth should be avoided in the education of their children. All the children, including the heir to the throne, the Duke of Clarence, who died in his youth, were allowed to grow up as free human beings among many companions of their own age. Before they were eighteen years old, two of the King's sons made a two-years' journey round the world, and thus became acquainted with all parts of the Empire. All Queen Victoria's protests against the too modern and free upbringing of her grandchildren were summarily rejected by Edward VII. The grandmother's authority ceased at the threshold of the nursery in Marlborough House. Just as he refused to have his children's education interfered with by their grandmother, so he himself did not interfere with the educational views of his eldest married son, the future King George V.

If one compares the portraits of King Edward at the age of forty with those of the present English King at the age of fifty-one, one recognizes at once the blessing of a freer upbringing. In the portrait of Queen Victoria's son one sees, in spite of all his lovableness and zest of life, in the many fine folds and wrinkles the fight for self-control, the struggle

against unbearable restraint, the hidden rebellion of his suppressed humanity. King George, the friendly, cheerful gentleman who walks informally among his subjects in the paddock at Newmarket in a brown overcoat and a bowler hat, has a completely care-free face. He laughs like a child over a happy joke; he bears no mark of having been robbed of his youth, and he is as young in body and mind as only the healthiest and happiest Englishman of this age can be. This youthful freshness, which he has managed to retain in his mature manhood, has enabled him, true to his great father's wish, to have his eldest son, the Prince of Wales, the next Edward in the English royal succession, brought up in a happy, joyful way that would have given the greatest pleasure to the grandfather had he lived to see it.

The new education in the English royal house is not founded on an empty enjoyment of life. It is not for nothing that Albert Edward, the grandchild, is called "the cleverest ambassador of a world-empire," a title which his grandfather might well have envied him. King Edward's suffering has borne fruit, for it has helped the respect for the human element to conquer in the upbringing of English royalty.

When the healthy man, the sportsman with good nerves, the man who has sufficient self-criticism to know the limits of his power and capacity, is the normal type within the English royal family in a period in which so many neurotic and pathological signs are apparent in dynasties of the same or even of a younger age, then the martyrdom of King Edward VII has not been in vain.

# BOOK IV

# IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

## CHAPTER I

# THE SICK NEPHEWS

THE assault on Paris was the last act the King performed as a physically healthy man. The last five years of Edward VII's life were an incessant struggle with lurking death. The heavy man who, like his father, very easily caught cold, was afflicted several times a year with severe bronchitis, accompanied by incessant difficulty of breathing and weakness of the heart. His physicians could not persuade him to lead the life of an invalid or of an "old man who ought to spare himself." If he were really ill he obeyed the doctors, but as soon as the immediate danger was over he resumed his daily life with all its obligations, and he continued to indulge in good living and much smoking. Because he himself paid no heed to any organic weakness, not even to the condition of his heart, he gave the impression of being a thoroughly strong, robust man. It was only by certain incidents which occurred during the last two years of his life—sudden faintings and heart attacks while on a visit to Berlin—that the outer world discovered that the jovial and courageous old gentleman had to go through dark hours of almost superhuman suffering.

The King's malady, the serious nature of which he fully realized, gave rise to the last great tragic conflict of his life. He knew that he could only prolong his life by withdrawing to Sandringham and Biarritz, away from the excitement of State affairs and important political questions. The carefree existence of an English Grand Seigneur, who could plan his visits abroad so as to avoid the worst periods of the English climate, would probably have enabled the King to attain the great age of his mother. But in order to lead this life, which would at least have secured him an easier death,

Edward VII would have had to renounce the throne. Next to him stood his calm, sober-minded and mature son—King George was already forty-two years old in the year 1907—whom, since his accession, he had kept continually informed through his Ministers on the most important State affairs.

In the year 1907 the King was exceedingly ill. For weeks lack of sleep and difficulty of breathing had weakened him to such an extent that he felt himself incapable of carrying on State affairs and making important decisions. In the intimacy of his family circle, with his physicians and Ministers, he considered the idea of renouncing the throne. His friends Cassel, Nicholson, and Hardinge rallied him to his duties, as forty years earlier Bismarck had rallied his "old gentleman" in the park of Babelsberg. The work of the diplomat-King was not yet finished. The agreement with Russia was about to materialize, and the King's Liberal advisers demanded that the monarch should place his personal ability at the disposal of the Cabinet so that a naval understanding with Germany could be brought about. The King remained at his post, and instead of retiring to the care-free, quiet life of an elderly gentleman, which he had indeed deserved, he summoned to his aid all his will-power in an effort to conquer his bodily weaknesses, which became ever greater and more apparent.

During the last few years of the King's life, the changeableness of mood which had characterized his youth again showed itself more strongly. Although to all appearance he was ever correct and friendly, the King hid behind his mask as a man of the world, moods which alternated almost daily and hourly between a morbidly exaggerated gaiety and a complete apathy and distaste for life. Patience, optimism, and fatalism in the judgment of political developments gave way to a nervous activity which showed the King's fear of being cut off before the completion of his work. He knew from the attitude of his physicians that any bad night might

prove his last, that any attack of asthma might kill him, and he became feverishly occupied with composing and adjusting disputes. He wished to lighten his son's burdens and duties, to leave to his capable but by no means extraordinarily gifted successor, a simpler and clearer domestic and foreign political situation than he himself had inherited when his mother died. His desire was to lead the two greatest dangers threatening England's world power—Russian Imperialism and the naval and commercial competition between Germany and England—into a definite channel. He was anxious to sweep away before his death these latent possibilities of conflict.

The King's anxiety to solve these problems may be more easily understood if the peculiar characters of the rulers of Germany and Russia are taken into consideration. Edward, the strictly constitutional monarch, who had never permitted himself to pursue at all costs his own object in life, and who was only able to take an active part in the policy of his country as an experienced and mature man of sixty, had every reason to watch with great misgiving the craving for power of his thoroughly unstable nephews, Nicholas II and William II, who, to make matters worse, felt strongly attracted to each other. Edward, in whose life only those aims which were built on firm foundations, clearly acknowledged, and definitely pursued, had had any importance, recognized the fact that his nephews would always be at the mercy, rather from weakness than from faults of character, of chance suggestions and influences.

To the English King, the German Kaiser was the archetype of a weak character who, having attained power too soon, had neither had the time nor the inclination to develop the intellectual gifts he undoubtedly possessed, nor to consolidate his character by experience and intercourse with men of strong character and definite purpose. The German Kaiser's

almost unlimited power, which not even a Bismarck had been able to curb, turned the positive tendencies of his mind and character into negative ones. Real power aggravated his self-confidence into monomania. Unquestioning admiration from his unprincipled servitors gave William II the idea that his gifts and many interests enabled him, the omniscient, to solve all problems and questions of his time, or to pronounce final judgment upon them. The boundlessness of the German Kaiser's personal power, and an almost equally unbelievable development of the German Empire, furthered by a Court whose sole interests were pomp and vanity, deceived the ruler as to the real limits of the foreign political activity of his country. The criticism and apprehension which the German policy aroused abroad was looked upon by the Kaiser, who was thoroughly neurotic on this point, as a proof of the critic's malevolent disposition towards himself, just as he considered any criticism of domestic administration as a personal insult. Because the healthy body of the German nation could bear the hot-house growth of the inner political faults of the régime without interruption or disturbance of its external progress, William II thought he had every right to put down not only the critics of his home policy as despicable and nagging gossip-mongers, but he allowed himself to be misled into considering critics abroad as being merely "envious of the German Empire." That the inconstancy and nervous over-activity of the German policy must necessarily lead to defensive measures, that older nations whose empire development had been much more gradual would be on their guard against the possibilities of the young German Empire's expansion in world power, did not enter William II's field of vision. No foreign political opposition which Germany encountered was tested on its merits. Any initiative in the foreign policy of another country was set down as an insult and an attempt to belittle the importance of the German

Kaiser. The irresponsibility and indiscrimination which became the order of the day with the Kaiser and his "advisers" in their procedure against home political opposition was extended to foreign policy. Opposition against Germany was *lèse Majesté* and petty jealousy. The Kaiser ascribed to all his opponents mean motives, and this induced him to employ unscrupulous methods. Every dissension, every candid difference in point of view between other countries, was made use of for trivial German intrigues, which from the turn of the century onwards strengthened the universal impression abroad that the only consistent guiding principle of German policy was to stir up quarrels between neighbours and then to exploit them.

The slackness of the Reichstag and the want of character of most of the Kaiser's advisers inevitably created an impression among foreign observers that, in foreign policy, only the boundless political dreams and fancies of the monarch need be reckoned with. William II's extensive correspondence with foreign princes, his frequent journeys—the main objects of which were never clear—and Holstein's numerous tricks in the scheming and plotting of the "Imperial actions," put all European Cabinets on their guard against the "words and deeds" of the hysterical German ruler, whose optimism was without limits and whose sensitiveness almost amounted to persecution mania. Towards the end of Edward VII's life, his distaste for his nephew was aggravated by personal and particular elements. The older the German ruler grew, the more striking became his resemblance to that King of the house of Guelph, whose life ended in madness, namely, George III. This great-grandfather of the English King and great-great-grandfather of William II died in a state of imbecility and religious mania, originating in his conviction that his people misjudged him out of malice and meanness. The more George III's Ministers felt called upon to thwart the

self-glorifying whims of the King, above all in the struggle against America and France, the stronger became the feeling possessing the King, that God, who had inspired his actions, had also laid upon him the cross of being unable to convince his Ministers and his people of his infallibility. The extreme of the virulent form of George III's mental sufferings was madness, the reaction of an exceedingly conceited man to limitations imposed by the English constitutional system. The influence of this maternal ancestor was strengthened in William II's case by a "manic" trait of the Hohenzollerns. Frederick William I suffered from persecution mania, Frederick William II and IV were mentally deranged erotics with an admixture of orgiastic and religious impulses.

Every sermon on the imperial yacht, the *Hohenzollern*, every speech in which the Kaiser posed as the favoured instrument of Heaven, in close touch with the Deity, every denunciation by the Kaiser of opposition and criticism as a lack of faith in his princely mission, strengthened the eminently sane and practical English King in his conviction that a material settlement of Anglo-German relations could only be achieved if the Kaiser were circumvented and contact with other German forces established. During King Edward's sleepless nights and in his persistent struggle against death one phantom of terror was ever present with him. To his mind George III, who had frequently driven the British Empire to the edge of the abyss and whose obstinacy was the cause of the defection of the United States, seemed to have been re-incarnated in the person of William II, who demanded the indiscriminating devotion of the second richest nation in Europe and who wielded the power of the strongest army and the second strongest fleet.

The last Russian Czar, his other nephew, seemed to King Edward to be no less threatening. The Czar also possessed many good qualities which, again because of his early acces-

sion to the throne, were not allowed to develop. Here too we find inconstancy and moods which changed from dreams of omnipotence to thoughts of abdication. Contrary to the German monarch, the Czar was readily accessible to foreign influences. Encouraged by his wife, he took refuge in religion as a consolation for all the political and human injustice to which he had been subject. Timid and uncertain in judgment, the Czar, although outwardly clinging to his autocracy, was always ready to give up the realities of power to persons who were willing to free him from the burden of a sovereign's responsibilities. But under the Russian system, such persons must be either political adventurers or super-Nationalists, who hoped to be able to make use of the Czar's power for the furthering of their own illimitable schemes. While the Czar's weakness of character would unavoidably lay him open to all those political influences and personalities which were likewise anti-British, there was, in King Edward's opinion, a second danger: the influence exerted by the abnormally sanguine William II on his melancholy and apathetic cousin, Nicholas II. As we know now from his correspondence with the Czar, and as Edward learned from his Danish sister-in-law, Marie, the Czar's mother, the Kaiser made at critical periods frequent successful appeals to their common claims, rights, and conceptions as sovereigns specially favoured by Heaven, so that he might take the Czar intellectually in tow. The events at Björkö had made the King fully aware of this danger.

Edward VII noted his nephew's weakness of character with all the more apprehension because the Russian ruler's fear of responsibility rendered him a helpless prey not only to anti-British but to all anti-constitutional and anti-democratic influences. After the deaths of the second and third Alexanders, the hope was cherished by the then heir-apparent to the English throne that a change of monarch in Russia would

bring about a more liberal régime, and that the provincial Diets would be further developed into a Parliamentary system. With his plan for an Anglo-Russian agreement in mind, the English monarch considered such a development particularly important, because he knew that all English electors with a tendency towards the "left" would look upon an English rapprochement with the "Czar's bloodhounds" with particular disapproval. Every development in Russia towards Parliamentary government would, on the other hand, make it easier for English politicians who were in favour of an agreement to appoach the Russian standpoint in Asiatic questions in a more accommodating spirit.

Although, as an older and wiser man with ripe political experience, the King must often have suffered greatly because his nephews, with their changeable natures and erratic policy, had succeeded to power many years before he had, whereas he while still heir-apparent had had to take his place behind them in public ceremonies as international Court procedure ordained, he had a moral ascendancy over them by virtue of his character. Without ever prejudicing his own dignity he was able, by the stability, wisdom, and cleverly simulated indifference of his letters to his nephews, to exercise a calming effect on them. His correspondence with the Czar in the year 1904, and with the German Kaiser in 1901, are good examples of the tone of their intercourse.

In the first months of the Russo-Japanese war, when Russia was still in a victorious mood, the Czar, probably strengthened by his German cousin in the delusion that other Great Powers would try to cheat Russia out of the fruits of her victory, wrote very excitedly to the King on 17th April 1904:

"Taught by bitter experience in the years 1856 and 1878, there is not a man in the whole of Russia who would

tolerate another country mixing in this affair of ours and Japan's. This seems to be quite just, my dear Uncle Bertie. No one hindered England at the conclusion of her South African war. I hope you won't mind my telling you this frankly, but I prefer you should hear it privately from me than in any other way."

The King, who believed that Japan would win, but who would not jeopardize the possibility of raising objections to a peace which might prejudice British interests in the Far East, let his excited nephew wait three weeks for an answer and then, after taking counsel with Lord Lansdowne, wrote the following letter, as from a good uncle to his excited little nephew:

"I am much interested in your statement that you think there may be difficulties when the end of the war is near, or rather when negotiations for peace are opened. You say there is not a man in Russia who would tolerate the intervention of another country in such circumstances. I quite understand this statement, and am strongly of the opinion that the interests of peace are rarely served by even the best intentioned offers of intervention unless both belligerents desire it. I should suppose that this would be the general view of all the Powers, and that none of them would desire to interfere unasked unless their existing rights were menaced by the proposed terms of peace, an eventuality which I am sure neither they nor you see any reason to regard as probable.

"It gave me great pleasure to make the acquaintance last month of your Minister at Copenhagen, M. Isvolsky. In him you have a man of remarkable intelligence and who is, I am sure, one of your ablest and most devoted

servants. I had a long conversation with him at Copenhagen, the substance of which has, I believe, been imparted to you. My earnest desire, which I am convinced you will share, is that at the conclusion of the war our two countries may come to a satisfactory settlement regarding many difficult matters between us, and that a lasting agreement may be arrived at similar to the one which we have lately concluded with France."

On 30th December 1901, Kaiser William sent the following letter to his English uncle, thanking him for a Christmas present.

"Dearest Uncle, I hasten to offer you my sincere and warmest thanks for the kind letter by Sir Frank (Lascelles), the kind message and the most touching and splendid gift of dear Papa's Highland dress. It was a most kind thought and has given me great pleasure. I well remember having often stood as a boy before the box in Papa's dressing-room and enviously admiring the precious and glittering contents. How well it suited him and what a fine figure he made in it. I always wondered where the things had gone to, as dear Mama never said anything about them, and I had quite lost sight of them. The last time I wore Highland dress at Balmoral was in 1878, in September, when I visited dear Grandmamma and was able to go out deer-stalking on Lochnagar. Dear Grandpapa's gigantic old jager was still in waiting on Grandmamma and looked after my rifles, whilst a very nice old, but fine head-keeper, with a good Highland name and a splendid face, stalked with me. All these memories come back to me when I saw the suit again, and made me think how the time flies fast, but I was deeply sensitive to the kind thoughts that prompted you to send the things back to me.

"The vanishing year has been one of care and deep sorrow to us all, and the loss of two such eminent women as dear Grandmamma and poor Mother is a great blow, leaving for a long time a void which closes up very slowly. I thank God that I could be in time to see dear Grandmamma once more and to be near you and aunt to help you in bearing the first effects of the awful blow.

"What a magnificent realm she has left you, and what a fine position in the world. In fact the first "World Empire" since the Roman Empire. May it always throw in its weight on the side of peace and justice! I gladly reciprocate all you say about the relations of our two countries, and our personal ones; they are of the same blood and they have the same creed and they belong to the great Teutonic race which Heaven has entrusted with the culture of the world; for apart from the Eastern races there is no other race left for God to work His will in and upon the world except ours, that is I think grounds enough to keep Peace and to foster mutual recognition and reciprocity in all that draws us together, and to sink everything which could part us. The Press is awful on both sides, but here it has nothing to say, for I am the sole arbiter and master of German foreign policy and the Government and country must follow me even if I have to "face the music." May your Government never forget this and never place me in jeopardy to have to choose a course which would be a misfortune to both them and us!"

A few days later, the German Kaiser wrote a second letter to his uncle, and in it he referred to a speech made by Chamberlain in Edinburgh on 25th October, 1901, wherein a passage occurred, which was interpreted in Germany as a criticism of the German conduct of the Franco-Prussian War. William II wrote:

"By dint of soothing and calming the more turbulent sons of my Fatherland and their Press I had at last with great efforts managed to get the papers quiet here. You may well imagine with what dismay and very deep regret I read the last speech of the most ill-advised Colonial Secretary. It is a conglomeration of overbearing bluff and secret insult to the other Nations at large, which will do a great deal of harm, provoking sharp repartees and creating unnecessary uneasiness all over the world. It was a most unlucky thing to do, and if he does not stop these lucubrations, which he certainly likes to spring on mankind in general, one fine day he will wake up and see his country in the greatest of muddles ever yet seen."

On 15th February, King Edward answered:

"In sending my son, George, to Berlin, to spend the anniversary of your birthday with you, I intended it as a personal mark of affection and friendship towards you, but I must confess that since reading the violent speeches which have been made quite recently in the Reichstag against England, and especially against my Colonial Minister and my Army, which show such a strong feeling of animosity against my country, I think that under the circumstances it would be better for him not to go where he is liable to be insulted or to be treated by the public in a manner which I feel sure no one would regret more than yourself. It is very painful to me to have to write this, but I feel I have no other alternative. I regret also to read in the last paragraph of your letter of the 6th instant a very strong remark you make concerning Mr. Chamberlain, and the speech to which you allude is, I presume, the one made on 25th October last year at Edinburgh. You are, I am sure, far too sensible and know

England too well not to feel certain that he had not the slightest intention of saying anything disparaging to your fine and brave Army. However, the German Press took it up violently and distorted to a great extent what he said. I had hoped that your Chancellor, Count von Bülow, would have explained to the Reichstag that, as Lord Lansdowne repeatedly told Count Metternich, Mr. Chamberlain's words were not intended to reflect upon the armies of Germany, but that they appeared to my Government quite incapable of the interpretation which had been placed upon them. Unfortunately, however, he acted otherwise. Ever since my accession, now nearly a year ago, I have had but one desire, my dear William, and that is that the two countries should "pull well" together in spite of the strong Boer feeling in yours, which however, they have a perfect right to express without heaping insults on my brave Army of which you are a Field-Marshal, and accusing them of having committed the horrors in South Africa with which they have been so unjustly charged. I must express my deep regret that these gross libels on my Army should, so far as I am aware, have received no check or discouragement from the German Government."

If one compares the authors of these letters—the autocratic ruler of forty-two years of age with the constitutional monarch of sixty-one—it is easy to understand what a tragedy it must have been to King Edward VII that he only ascended the throne thirteen years after Kaiser William II and seven years after Czar Nicholas II. He came to power too late to repair the mischief wrought by their unstable, impulsive, personal policy in every part of the globe, and he was too old to hope to survive them. He could but build defences to protect coming generations against future evils.

## CHAPTER II

# THE ROAD TO REVAL

ALTHOUGH they did not render it exactly easy for him, we can see from the correspondence between the King of England and his two imperial nephews in Germany and Russia, how the thought of an understanding was uppermost in Edward VII's mind, even when bad feeling between these countries and England ran highest. Edward's letter to the last German Kaiser was written after Metternich and Lansdowne had come to the conclusion, at the end of December 1901, that an Anglo-German alliance was impossible of achievement as Germany was not prepared to forsake the Triple Alliance, and Britain, still half obsessed by the "splendid isolation" ideology, could not make up her mind to enter the Triple Alliance and thus stand committed to Austria's Near-Eastern policy and Italy's colonial aspirations.

When King Edward and Lansdowne concluded the Entente with France, the former was already convinced of the necessity of supplementing this convention at the earliest possible moment by a comprehensive adjustment of British interests with Russia. This policy was not only in the direct line of continuity with the aims the King had pursued since his earliest youth, but it was also—and to a far greater extent than the French Entente—conditioned by the exigencies of Empire defence.

The South African War had convinced all English diplomats and military experts that the organization of the Army was so antiquated and cumbersome that for at least a decade it would not be in a position to meet any modern army in the field with any chance of success, no matter how limited the theatre of war or how isolated the locality in which

British interests were involved. While the most diverse reorganization schemes were made the subject of debate within the Parties and in Parliament—Lord Roberts demanding general conscription—the victor of the South African War, Lord Kitchener, was sent to India for the purpose of modernizing the Army there and putting the defences of the North-Western Frontier into working order. Even though there was no parliamentary control in India, the progress of army reform there was not much quicker than in England, because differences between Curzon and Kitchener, which were only disposed of by Curzon's retirement in 1905, delayed the work of reorganization. During this period, when Britain's defensive strength was, technically speaking, at its lowest ebb, Turkey was visibly disintegrating and Russia was being defeated by Japan.

If Russian history had one lesson to teach, it was that the Russian Colossus, with its practically inexhaustible resources of man-power, which had only just been tapped by the casualties in the Russo-Japanese War, would now turn its energies in another direction. Russia, cut off from the Mediterranean by the Crimean War and checked in her designs on Constantinople by the Berlin Congress, had concentrated on Central Asia. Somewhat sobered by Britain's opposition and the British campaigns in Afghanistan, Russian imperialism had then turned to the Far East, its objective being the conquest of Northern China, and, if possible, the whole of the ports on the Gulf of Petschili. But there Japan had barred the way. Every British statesman who could see beyond the immediate future was forced to reckon with the possibility of a renewed Russian thrust towards the Balkans and Turkey, or Central Asia, as the Russo-Japanese War had had a quite unforeseen adverse influence on British interests. Pan-Asiatic nationalism was born on the battlefields of Manchuria, during the victorious advance of an Asiatic race

whose civilization was technical and merely superficial. The Indians, at least those belonging to the business world and the members of the academic and technical professions, were likewise covered with a veneer of western civilization, thanks to the British educational system, and they imagined that with the knowledge they had acquired and by sheer force of numbers they might one day be able to rid themselves of the English. While the Indian masses now as heretofore hardly dared to move, dissatisfaction against England spread in just those strata of the population which, by means of passive resistance or sabotage in the rear of a British army operating against Russia, were in a position to work the greatest possible mischief in the internal administration, the transport system, the food supply, and the monetary system of the country. The Peace of Portsmouth, in which Russia got off comparatively lightly, was promulgated in August 1905. At that time no guiding principles for a reform of the British Army had yet been laid down, and the Balfour Cabinet was in an acute state of disruption. If one finally dismisses from one's mind the idea that Britain had any intention of alienating Russia and Germany, it becomes evident that Britain, after the agreement with France was completed, was bound to feel the pressing need for a rapprochement with Russia, because experience had shown that Russia changed its expansionist objectives very suddenly. Whereas the Berlin Congress had only concluded its deliberations in the midsummer of 1878, the ninth decade of the last century had witnessed almost from its first to its last day constantly recurring threats to Britain's status in Asia on the part of Russia.

On 8th April 1904, the Anglo-French Entente was signed in London. On 14th April the British Minister in Copenhagen gave a luncheon party at which Edward VII and the Russian Ambassador Isvolsky were present. In the course of

a *tête-à-tête* conversation, upon which Isvolsky reported at length, the King emphasized that the consummation of the Anglo-French Entente had filled him with the hope of arriving by the same methods at a still more important result, namely, a similar entente with Russia, an entente which had always been the object of his most earnest desires. The newly appointed British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Sir Charles Hardinge, had been instructed to establish the most cordial relations with the Russian Government, and to contrive a means whereby a comprehensive settlement of all outstanding questions separating the two countries could be effected. The Entente with France was, in accordance with the King's wishes, the stepping-stone for this other entente, the achievement of which would be more difficult, but therefore all the more necessary and desirable.

The King had taken this step in the logical development of his policy on his own responsibility. He reported his conversation with Isvolsky to his Foreign Secretary, Lansdowne, who replied telegraphically that he had been informed that Isvolsky was the coming man in Russia, and that, if he might venture to say so, "Your Majesty's language to M. Isvolsky seems to have been most opportune and judicious." Giving proof of an excellent judgment of character, Isvolsky did not treat the King of England as a diplomatic opponent in a game of chess, but as one sportsman would another. Two days after the conversation in the British Legation, Isvolsky called on the King and submitted to him for approval and correction a copy of the telegram on their conversation which he intended to despatch to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at St. Petersburg. At the King's request Isvolsky left with him a copy with permission to send this to the English Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne. In a covering letter from the King to Lord Lansdowne occur the following almost touchingly modest words: "I hope you

will not consider anything I said is indiscreet. I confess I do not think so myself, my only object being if possible to find the means of paving the way towards a better understanding with Russia, and, if possible, in time to have *pourparlers* on the vexed questions pending between the two countries."

The first step on the road to Reval had been taken, although many internal and external political events combined to militate against the realization of the King's "most earnest desires." Isvolsky advocated the acceptance of the British proposal for negotiations because, as he had already indirectly admitted to the King, the possibility of a Russian defeat entered very strongly into his calculations. Berlin, on the contrary, expected a "glorious" Russian victory. On 6th June 1904, William II considered it his duty to renew his warning to the Czar not to allow himself to be robbed of the fruits of victory through outside mediation. "I am sure," he wrote, "England will by times renew her efforts to make proposals to you about mediation—it is in fact the special mission of Hardinge, as I know—though you have already so strongly repudiated it, and which is most presuming in the extreme on her part, seeing that the war has only just begun—she is afraid for her money, and wants to get Thibet cheaply—I shall certainly try to dissuade Uncle Bertie as soon as I meet him from harassing you with any more such proposals. Should in the course of events mediation seem advisable to you, it is clear that the first wish for it must come from you, and you may be sure that I shall always be at your disposal!"

Although the King's courageous initiative at Copenhagen had no immediate practical consequence, it was of the utmost importance psychologically as a preparation for the final achievement of the Entente. The British proposals for an understanding had been made before Russia was decisively defeated. The sudden descent of the Kaiser on his Russian

colleagues at Björkö took place at a time when the autocrat of all the Russians was in the throes of the deepest depression as a result of the defeat.

The subsequent course of events in international politics appeared to condemn the King's skilful action to the same fate which overtook his efforts as heir-apparent for a rapprochement with Russia. On its way to the Far East the Russian Baltic Fleet bombarded the Hull fishing fleet. Two British seamen were killed and this roused a tremendous storm of indignation. Behind the clamour of the Press stood the military and naval experts, who held that the quickest way to settle the Anglo-Russian antagonism was to make common cause with Japan and pay Russia in her own coin. The bombardment of the fishing fleet, argued military men, would afford France a welcome opportunity of renouncing her treaty obligations, for both the Dual and the Triple Alliances were based on the understanding that the assistance of an ally could become effective only in the event of one of the contracting parties, while at war, being "attacked" by another party. The British militarists held that on this occasion Russia itself and not Britain would be the aggressor if war occurred.

When the King received the information of the bombardment of the fishing fleet he was greatly shocked, and in a telegram he gave the Czar to understand that it was contrary to all seafaring traditions for the Russian Fleet to proceed on its way without going to the aid of the fishing smacks it had bombarded. The first thing to be seen to was the punishment of the responsible Russian Admiral. When the Russian Government informed England that before the departure of the fleet they had received information according to which Japan had bought torpedo boats in Europe and intended to attack the Russian Baltic Fleet before it entered the Channel, the King wrote to Lansdowne:

"I see our difficulty, and that is our demand on the Russian Government, to punish somebody; should we in a similar position consent to do so? I almost think not, and it might therefore be awkward if we placed ourselves in a position which would meet with an absolute refusal. Public opinion, egged on with unnecessary violence by the Press, is very strong against Russia, but are we prepared to go to war with her? It would, I think, be a dire calamity for this country, as nobody knows what it would involve, and after all for the sake of the heirs of two harmless fishermen."

The next day, as the newspapers continued their outcry, the King telegraphed to Lansdowne:

"Strongly deprecate pressing for punishment of Admiral. Russia could not accept such a humiliation."

On the same day he wrote to his Foreign Secretary:

"The Press has become so violent that it may drag us into a war before we know where we are, and war between England and Russia would be so serious a calamity that we can hardly think of its possibility."

On the following day he wrote, "I really think that we see daylight, and what has been a most grave and serious incident may pass away quietly and perhaps we may be on better footing with Russia later." These expressions of opinion by the King to his Foreign Secretary, which were not meant for publication, not only throw light on the singleness of purpose with which the King pursued a clarification of Anglo-Russian relations, but also on the relative strength of the two countries, which has already been demonstrated in detail, and which alone, quite independent of the relations between England and Germany at that moment, fully justified Britain's desire for an understanding.

# CHANGE OF MENTAL ATTITUDE

WHILE England was preparing to come to an understanding with Russia, it had become apparent to English diplomats that William II had once more undergone a change of mental attitude. The "peril to the world's peace," which at one time had a "yellow" complexion and later seemed dependent on the "unavoidable" conflicts between the Protestant and Germanic peoples, and the Slavonic peoples, had once more changed. In William II's imagination England, and particularly the King of England, had suddenly become the enemy of all European countries. A most unsympathetic feeling towards Germany was caused in England by the Kaiser's antipathy to his uncle, and by the renewed activity of an opportunist German Foreign Policy.

Eulenburg reported to Bülow from London that in England there was a widespread opinion that Germany was preparing to attack her; that the increased activity of the British fleet was for defensive and certainly not for offensive purposes; and that King Edward had had pacifying articles published in the *Daily Telegraph* to prevent Germany from throwing herself into Russia's arms out of sheer nervousness.

The alarm felt by the British diplomats and the War Office was quite justified. Immediately after the incident of the bombardment of the fishing fleet on the Dogger Bank, the Kaiser sent to the Czar the draft of a German-Russian alliance, and in explaining his proposals he drew attention to the fact that serious damage could be done to England if Russia were to advance into Central Asia. The loss of India, wrote the Kaiser, would be a "mortal blow" for England. Under the illusion that England had not yet attempted to

approach Russia he believed, after the fall of Port Arthur, that by offering the Czar an alliance he would console him for his domestic and foreign disasters and incline him favourably towards Germany. The Czar acted with great caution. He showed the letter to Lamsdorff, who pointed out to him that the German ruler's proposals could only be considered after an understanding with France. But the Kaiser refused to allow his proposition to be submitted to France.

The correspondence between the imperial cousins was continued during the February revolution of 1905, and in the early summer William II received the impression that the Czar had become an easy prey. The defeats in Manchuria, the necessity for commencing Peace negotiations, and the idea, cleverly fostered by the Kaiser, that the English King was incessantly intriguing against Russia, seemed to indicate that the time was most opportune for urging the Czar to action. Even before the Peace of Portsmouth, when the Czar was still uncertain as to the future of his country and the measure of his losses, the Kaiser and the Czar had arranged a meeting at Björkö, off the Finnish coast. The Kaiser definitely stated that he would appear as a "tourist without any ceremony." When the Czar arrived on board the *Hohenzollern,* he was received by the Kaiser, attended by Herr von Tschirschky, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Czar was in a state of the deepest depression. Russia had lost the war, the domestic situation was uncertain, France had entered into an agreement with England, Witte was absent in America, and in his own home there brooded a psychopathic atmosphere; and all these facts combined had driven the Czar, who constantly imagined himself the objective of assassins and would scarcely eat for fear of being poisoned, into a state of terrible anxiety. On this unhappy creature the Kaiser, who was intoxicated by boundless visions of world domination, attainable through the close

alliance of Germany and Russia, let loose the flood of his imaginative optimism. The Czar, like all weak characters, was inclined to make a third person accountable for his troubles, and in spite of the Isvolsky telegram and the considerate behaviour of the British Government after the bombardment of the English fishing fleet, he allowed the Kaiser to talk him into a fury against his English uncle.

On 24th July 1905, the Czar and the Kaiser signed the Treaty of Björkö. Von Tschirschky countersigned for Germany, and a naval officer, a certain Admiral Birilew, who had never even seen or read the treaty, countersigned for Russia. The Kaiser and the Czar vowed to keep the alliance secret until the end of the Russo-Japanese War, when France should be invited to join. In reporting to the Chancellor the events which had taken place on the *Hohenzollern,* the Kaiser wrote that the Czar had called the King of England the greatest author of evil, the wiliest and most dangerous intriguer in the whole world. The Kaiser assured the Czar that he had suffered enough through his uncle, and he warned the Russian ruler of the English King's "passion" (manifested only once so far) for arranging treaties. According to the Kaiser, the Czar bound himself on his word of honour never to conclude a treaty with his English uncle—particularly if the treaty were directed against Germany.

The Kaiser imagined this treaty as the anti-English instrument of a German-Russian world domination—with the emphasis on the word German. Directly after his departure the Kaiser wrote to his Russian cousin:

> "In time to come it may not be impossible that even Japan may feel inclined to join it. This would cool down English self-assertion and impertinence as she is her ally too. The 24th July 1905 is a corner-stone in European politics and turns over a new leaf in the history of the

world . . . Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, will all be attracted to this new centre of gravity. . . . They will revolve in the orbit of the great block of powers (Russia, Germany, France, Austria, Italy) and feel confidence in leaning on and revolving around this mass. . . .

"America will stand on the side of this combination. . . . The Continental Combine flanked by America is the sole and only manner to effectively block the way to the whole world becoming John Bull's private property, which he exploits to his heart's content, after having, by his intrigues without end, set the rest of the civilized nations by each other's ears for his own personal benefit."

On 22nd and 24th August, he reported to the Czar that King Edward was making great and, in the Kaiser's opinion, vain efforts to discover what had taken place at Björkö. It seems very doubtful whether these efforts were really vain, for at the same time King Edward was trying to induce Count Witte, who was on his way home from America, to visit him in London in order to discuss Anglo-Russian relations.

When on 30th August the Czar communicated the terms of the treaty to Count Lamsdorff, its fate was already sealed. In consideration of its liabilities towards France, the Russian Government refused to ratify the treaty, and Birilew's signature was of course worthless. The Kaiser was not yet prepared to admit defeat. He telegraphed on 29th September to the Czar that pressure must be brought to bear on France to acknowledge what had been settled in Björkö, adding, "what is signed, is signed. God is our testator!"

Björkö had another effect on European politics, which still persisted at the time of the Versailles Treaty. Should a war be declared between England on the one side and Germany or Russia on the other, the two emperors had agreed to raise

no objections to each other's occupation of Denmark. The Czar's mother, a Danish princess, heard of this "secondary agreement" and notified her father. King Christian could think of no other way out of the difficulty than to send a special envoy to his powerful son-in-law, the King of England. King Edward answered the representations of Count Friis as follows:

> "In my opinion you take too gloomy a view of the future. The only causes of conflict which have arisen have been happily settled, a fact which shows a distinct will-to-peace tendency in Europe; but I will admit this, that with a man of so impulsive a temperament as the German Emperor at the head of the greatest military Power in Europe, anything may happen."

This visit had no further political consequences. In his correspondence the Kaiser accused his uncle of having tried to influence the Czar through his mother—with the Russian Ambassador in London as the go-between—to conclude an Anglo-Russian agreement. The Czar repudiated the accusation against his Ambassador who, he said, had visited the Danish Court with his full knowledge and consent. King Edward's commentary on his nephew's double-dealing is not without interest: "People can talk if they like of perfidious Albion, but can there really be anything more perfidious and more stupid than the present policy of the Kaiser?"

While the English King, according to the Kaiser, was making every possible effort to unveil the "mystery of Björkö" and to conspire with Denmark against Germany, King Edward pacified the Danes and wrote a letter to his nephew, barely six months after Björkö, in which he expressed a desire for more friendly relations between England and Germany and a hope that the Press would be more dis-

creet. In this letter a paragraph occurs in which the King wishes the Algeciras Conference every success, particularly in promoting better feelings between Germany, England, and France. The King assured his nephew that England harbored no "aggressive feelings" towards Germany.

The Kaiser, with a child's ever-varying moods, was suddenly again ready to warm himself on the English hearth—for Witte and Lamsdorff, three months earlier, had refused to ratify the Björkö treaty. On 1st February, 1906, he wrote his uncle the following letter, which would be useful if the last German Kaiser were to be psychoanalysed:

"The whole letter breathed such an atmosphere of kindness and warm, sympathetic friendship that it constitutes the most cherished gift among my presents.

"There is no denying the fact that the political relations between the two countries had little by little become charged with electrical fluid to such an extent that its discharge might have created endless woe to both.

"In both countries newspapers as well as individuals, some actuated by political, some by personal motives, worked the public feeling to such a degree that both nations began to distrust each other, thereby causing an immense amount of mischief and the seeds of discord to grow. *Cui bono?* Who was to benefit by this nefarious system? Certainly, as far as I can see, neither of our two nations has gained even the slightest advantage by this! And as for us two? What concerns me, this state of affairs has deeply grieved me, as my life's endeavour and ideal was to accustom the two nations to work of a common accord in mutual good understanding for the peace and wellbeing of their inhabitants and of the whole world. However, according to the British proverb, 'It's no use to cry over spilt milk!' Let bygones be bygones!

"You have just extended your cordial hospitality to my Ambassador Count Metternich, on the memorable day of dear Grandmama's death. Let us remember the silent hours when we watched and prayed at her bedside, and when the spirit of that great Sovereign-Lady passed away, as she drew her last breath in my arms. I feel sure that from the home of Eternal Light she is now looking down upon us, and will rejoice when she sees our hands clasped in cordial and loyal friendship.

"My policy with regard to Peace is as clear as crystal, and to mistake it ought to be impossible. Yet it is with pleasure I seize this opportunity once more to solemnly repeat, and I hope you will believe me, that it is my earnest endeavour and wish to remain in peace with all Countries, especially my neighbours. . . ."

After the Kaiser had written minutely on the prospects of the Algeciras Conference, there followed another typically hypocritical paragraph: "How deeply I deplore your beloved father-in-law's sudden departure from life. It seemed, though he was so aged, as if he never could be ill or be taken from us. One was so accustomed to count on his fine constitution! And yet what a lovely and peaceful end! It was that of a patriarch! Poor Aunt Alix, how she must feel the blow, to lose such a loving, adored, chivalrous, warmhearted, noble father! Perhaps possibly, we may meet at the funeral, as I am going to Copenhagen myself. I trust that in the course of this year we shall be able to meet each other, an incident to which I look forward with great pleasure."

One may be allowed to question whether the anti-Danish plans of Germany and Russia, forged at Björkö, can have brightened or eased the last weeks of the "noble patriarch."

The best reflection on the Kaiser's mental gyrations and fickleness was written towards the end of 1906 by the Eng-

lish Prime Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, in his reply to King Edward's communication, according to which the Kaiser intended to make England a present of a statue of King William III: "There are many signs of a desire in that quarter to be civil to this country. I do not wish to be unduly suspicious, but there is an ugly Italian proverb that often comes to my mind. It runs thus: *Chi ti carezza piu che non suole, o t'ingannato ha, o t'ingannar vuole!* ('He who makes more fuss of you than usual, has either deceived you, or proposes to do so.')"

# AGAINST ALL OPPOSITION

On the Continent and in America it was believed that the King had carried out his entente policy with the full support of his Ministers and with the cordial approval of his people. But the Entente with France was only brought about after Chamberlain had taken advantage of his plentiful opportunities for investigating Germany's capability of and desire for an alliance. King Edward staked his personal influence in Paris, not at the instigation but against the recommendations of his cautious Minister. The Copenhagen Conference with Isvolsky had taken place on the initiative of the King, who had realized at once that he could work harmoniously with the Russian diplomat. The road to Reval was beset not only with foreign political obstacles, but also with serious domestic troubles raised by the ultra-Imperialists, the Socialists, and the Liberal friends of mankind, who, with a kind of moral Phariseeism, considered England too good to have anything to do with Russia.

The strongest and politically the most weighty opposition to an understanding with Russia came from the Conservatives. In the Conservative Party there had always been a very large number of men who, either as high officials or as governors of Indian provinces, had familiarized themselves with Indian and Asiatic problems. These men lived in an atmosphere of mistrust of Russia and apprehension of attack. This could scarcely be otherwise when the situation on the North-west Frontier and in Central Asia was considered. Russia, the enemy of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, had caused them many sleepless nights. All measures, whether political or connected with the building of military railways or roads,

must first be tested from the point of view of the defence of India against Russia.

Russia's opponents in the House of Lord's received unexpected support in 1905 in the person of Lord Curzon, the retired Viceroy. In contrast to other "Indian experts" in the House of Lords, Curzon was not a very old man, retired on a pension, but a man of forty-five, at the height of his political power. His opposition and his apprehensions carried far more weight than did the objections of the "old croakers" of yesterday. At that time probably the greatest authority in England on Central Asiatic problems, he feared that a Liberal Government, in the political agreements which would have to precede the Entente, might give up the Himalayan outposts without insisting upon corresponding Russian concessions. As early as 1906, when Grey, through his colleague, Lord Morley, requested the views of the Indian Government regarding territorial agreements with Russia, Curzon's successor in Simla, Lord Minto, protested energetically against the idea.

The Conservative Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, absolutely agreed with the Liberal Viceroy in this matter. The Minister for India, Lord Morley, who had promised the English Parliament that he would be able to make large cuts in the Indian Army Budget, replied to the two Indian representatives that the question as to whether an understanding with Russia were desirable or likely to come to pass was not open to debate. The Cabinet had decided in favour of an Entente. It was not possible to have two foreign policies, one in Simla and one in Whitehall.

After the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief had been beaten on the principal question, they opposed with great tenacity any concession to Russia with regard to the boundaries of the Central Asiatic sphere of influence. Grey was faced with a difficult problem. After the war with Japan,

Russia could very easily be induced to make far-reaching concessions, from the English point of view, in return for the granting of loans. But a too complete victory of this kind for England would have discredited the anglophile Government in the Duma; and Russia would gain the impression that England, by compelling her to retreat still further in Central Asia, was improving on Japan's military success and supplementing the Peace of Portsmouth.

Since Kitchener and Minto, in their detailed criticism of the plans of the treaty, considered mainly military requirements, they greatly impressed the King, who on certain questions took the part of the Indian Government against the Cabinet. The Viceroy went so far as to induce the Amir of Afghanistan to write a letter to his "colleague" Edward, in which the Afghan Prince expressed the fear that these Anglo-Russian conventions might involve him in a war, or even cause his country to be entirely absorbed by Russia. The King gave the letter to Grey, who declared that no attention could be paid to the Afghan ruler's objections.

The Conservative opposition was of even greater importance to the Liberal Cabinet, because the negotiations with Russia caused uneasiness even within the Liberal camp. When the Czar convened the Duma after the February Revolution, there was only a mild opposition to the Anglo-Russian negotiations on the part of the Socialists. The Liberal Cabinet and the Liberal Party in the House of Commons believed that English readiness to negotiate would strengthen the Czar in a Liberal policy in home affairs. It was hoped that, with an understanding with England to its credit, a Liberal Russian Government would be able to establish a constitutional régime. The visit of the Russian Parliamentarians who were to represent the Duma at the Congress of the Interparliamentary Union was awaited with great enthusiasm in England. But on the day of the opening of the Congress the

news came from Russia that the Duma had been dissolved. In opening the Congress, Campbell-Bannerman referred to the event by calling out, amid loud applause from the delegates: "The Duma is dead, long live the Duma!"

Some weeks before the dissolution of the Duma, the King had had an instinctive foreboding that Russia was on the verge of a domestic crisis, and that this would have to be settled before the negotiations regarding the Entente could be continued and brought to a successful conclusion. In reply to the Foreign Office, which suggested in 1906 that he should visit the Czar in order to expedite the negotiations, the King wrote:

> "I honestly confess, that I can see no particular object in visiting the Emperor in Russia this year. The country is in a very unsettled state and will, I fear, not improve for some time to come. I hardly think that the country at home would much approve of my going there for a while. I have no desire to play the part of the German Emperor, who always meddles in other people's business. What advice could I possibly give the Emperor as to the management of his country? What right have I to do so, even if he were to listen to me, which I much doubt? Witte's object is that by my going I should enable him to float a Loan. What an extraordinary idea, and one that does not appeal to me in any way. . . ."

Grey still believed it necessary to support the "Liberal tendencies"—which were not present in the Russian Government—by an English gesture of friendship. He announced to the Russian Government the visit of a British Naval Squadron. The reply to this offer was the following telegram from the Czar to the King:

"I cannot but look upon the approaching visit of your Squadron with the greatest anxiety. To have to receive foreign guests when one's country is in a state of acute unrest is more than painful and inappropriate. You know how happy I should have been to receive the English Fleet in normal times, but now I can only beg of you to postpone the Squadron visit till another year."

While the Czar replaced Goremykin by Stolypin, and the mutinies and disturbances were put down by force of arms, the Liberal pacifists and the leaders of the Labour Party protested against any negotiations or political associations with Russia. Campbell-Bannerman's reference to the Duma had annoyed the Czar, and the political situation both at home and abroad was such that the negotiations dragged on for nearly a year, practically without result.

After the internal disturbances in Russia had been quelled, Stolypin and Isvolsky considered it necessary, far sooner than the King and the diplomatic observers in England had considered possible, to consolidate their régime by a startling diplomatic success. The negotiations with England were reopened in February in 1907, and at the end of August of the same year they were brought to a successful conclusion. During the winter, in a discussion on foreign policy, the opposition of the "Indian experts" in the House of Lords again found expression, when Lord Curzon stated, in what one might almost call a spirit of prophetic foreboding of reawakened Anglo-Russian antagonism in Asia after the war, that Grey's Treaty had not removed one single intrinsic cause for Anglo-Russian disputes, and that Russia was a power whose Asiatic policy could never be relied upon.

The Radicals and the Socialists either protested in the House of Commons and in the Press against the agreement

to divide Persia into a Russian and an English sphere of influence, or they condemned the whole idea of an understanding, maintaining that this convicted England of complicity in the "Blood guilt of the Czar." Any enthusiasm on the part of the English people was entirely out of the question. Many statesmen and military men, who approved of the logical sequence of the British policy, doubtless shared in silence Lord Curzon's apprehension that a different Russian Government might not consider itself bound by the Central Asiatic terms and the limitations imposed upon Russian imperialism as to the direction in which it could expand. This apprehension was quite as justified as the other, according to which the Russian Government, after Russian imperialism had been limited in Eastern Asia by Japan and in Central Asia by the new agreement, would of necessity be forced to seek a new direction for expansion in the Balkans and towards the Dardanelles.

The Anglo-Russian agreement was to be confirmed before the world by a ceremonious visit of the English King to the Court of the Czar in the early summer of 1908. In consideration of the internal tension in Russia, it was decided that the meeting should take place on the high seas or in the roadstead of Reval.

When the news of the King's visit to the Czar became known in England, it caused a tremendous outcry from the Socialists and Radicals. They demanded that the King's visit should be made dependent on the Czar's granting a general amnesty for all political agitators and imprisoned or deported Socialist members of the Duma. MacDonald led the agitation, and in a newspaper article he denounced the King's visit as "An Insult to our Country." In this article, in which he called the Czar a common murderer, MacDonald deemed it a scandal that the King of a constitutional state should

be expected to meet a miserable blood-stained creature like the Czar.[1]

The Independent Labour Party called numerous protest-meetings in which resolutions were passed demanding that the King should decline the invitation to the Russian Court. On the strength of these indignation meetings, the Liberal pacifists and the members of the Labour Party drew up a petition in which the King was begged to abstain from his visit to Russia. Some days later, in a debate on the Foreign Office vote, a member of the Labour Party proposed a vote of no confidence in Grey, on the grounds of the latter's refusal to countermand the King's visit or, if that were not possible, to make the visit absolutely unofficial. The vote of no confidence was defeated by 225 votes to 59, a third of the Liberal Party and the Conservatives abstaining from voting. Grey stated in his speech that all official visits of the King had promoted peace, and that it was desirable to maintain more friendly relations with Russia. Friendship with Russia was an integral constituent part of his foreign policy. Unfriendly relations with Russia could only lead to war. Balfour contented himself with the remark that it was injudicious to criticize the internal affairs of another country, or to allow the inner affairs of another country to influence one's foreign policy. The president of the third Duma sent the King a friendly telegram, in which he pointed out that constitutional institutions were being stabilized in Russia, and that all Russian Parties would welcome the King heartily.

The speeches and the divisions in Parliament had a peculiar sequel. The King objected strongly to the fact that

[1] When in August 1924, MacDonald signed a treaty with the by no means less blood-stained Communist-autocrats of Russia, a treaty which even contained an English guarantee of interest on Russian loans, the Conservatives were able to make use of a new edition of the above article at all their meetings of protest. They needed only to replace the word Czar by the word Commissar.

the leading Socialists and Liberals who were against the visit (which he was undertaking on the advice of his Foreign Minister) had made him the object of a big debate in Parliament, for this was entirely contrary to English Parliamentary usage as the King was not able to reply. The King was under the impression that a few theoretical Republicans had exploited his proposed visit to Russia in order to lower the prestige of the monarchy in the eyes of the English people, and to place the English constitutional monarch morally on the same plane as the exponents of unlimited absolutism. Keir Hardie, Victor Grayson and Ponsonby were struck off the list of those politicians who were regularly invited to the King's garden parties, but after Liberal protests and the intervention of Grey, these "signs of royal disfavour" were withdrawn.

Before the King left for Reval he was overwhelmed with a collection of the strangest petitions requesting him to intervene with the Czar in favour of the most varied interests. The brothers Rothschild begged him to champion the cause of the better treatment of the Jews in Russia. This appealed to the King, as did also the wish of his friend, Sir Ernest Cassel, for an audience with the Czar in order to discuss personally the plans for a Russian loan. A petition from a London banker, by name of Burdett, that the King should do his best to get concessions in Russia for an American firm, was flatly refused.

No incident occurred during the visit to Reval. On his way there the King was received in Kiel with a parade and naval manœuvres. In the after-dinner speeches of the King and the Czar, the peaceful character of the Anglo-Russian agreements and their narrow geographical limits (in Asia) were repeatedly emphasized. The Entente was as yet not in the least aggressive. It served the sole purpose of removing Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian causes for dispute and of

making these three Powers combine in all questions which touched their respective recognized spheres of interest. It is worth while emphasizing the fact that the two Ententes did not provide for any new sphere of interest for the participating Powers, but that already existing rights and claims of the Powers interested in these territories be settled by compensation.

## CHAPTER V

# SHADOWS OVER REVAL

WHILE the Anglo-French Entente had the assent of the British public in its widest sense, the rapprochement with Russia was never really popular. The Conservatives were the only Party who had been throughout consistent in their attitude towards Russia from the turn of the century onwards. They had always believed it to be impossible to bring Britain's Far Eastern interests into harmony with Russia's vague need for expansion, and it is significant in this connection that during the debate in the House of Commons on the King's journey to Russia, they abstained from voting so as to escape any responsibility for the policy of an understanding. Immediately they got into power after the World War they resolutely cut out the beginnings of an understanding with Bolshevist Russia, even to the breaking off of diplomatic relations.

The conservative objections to an understanding and a closer political connection with Russia were founded on the instability of Russian imperialist aims, of which history supplies many examples. Headed by Lord Curzon, their most capable foreign politician since the death of Joseph Chamberlain, the Conservatives recognized that Russian imperialism was not the function of a state intrinsically strong and firm, and therefore presumably of a conservative disposition, but that it was due to deep-seated psychological qualities of the mass of the people. As a human being, a citizen, a musician, an artist, or a poet, the Russian lives and thinks altogether in a void and he shuns all contact with other people, other powers, and other forces of which he is ignorant. Both the individual Russian and the Russian nation as an entity

are a-social. They are fundamentally opposed to any form of order, adjustment, or stability. Three Russians, a bottle of Vodka, and a box of cigarettes—and the stage is set for the emergence of a revolution or a new theory.

Russian external policy has always had two separate identities. It has pursued side by side concrete and imaginary aims. The ice-free port and the coronation of the Czar as Emperor of Byzantium in the Constantinople Hagia Sophia; cotton lands in Turkestan and the ruler of Russia as the Czar of all the Slavs; expansion in Persia and an unlimited "supremacy over all Asiatic territory from the Urals to the Pacific," these were the aims which determined, in motley succession, sometimes concurrently sometimes consecutively, the course of Russian external politics. They have in no way changed since the 1917 Revolution. The dozen or so gifted visionaries who call themselves the People's Commissars are merely a Czarist junta with a repainted signboard. The proletarian world revolution is another agitator's transcription of the one and only dream of the petty bourgeois Alexander III and his adviser Witte, erroneously regarded as a practical politician. Witte and Alexander attempted to achieve a Russian Asia by the railway line to Pekin and Tashkent; Zinoviev and Radek are seeking to accomplish it by means of the pan-Asiatic University and the Communist nuclei introduced into the Chinese Trade Unions.

The British Conservatives have at all times only concerned themselves with the reality of things and forces. They are the exponents of a policy which—in spite of its metaphysically dressed up Empire slogans—never found and never will find any connection with a policy whose objectives are sometimes purely material and at other times vague or transcendental.

The British Liberals, less definite than the Conservatives in their outlook on foreign affairs, believed it possible to

bridge over the Russian antagonism by goodwill and human kindliness. But all the attempts in this direction during the sixties, eighties, and nineties of the past century failed owing to the lack of a sound basis of understanding. The failure of the Reval Entente was also due to incompleteness of the settlement and to the effect of outside influences on Russian imperialism.

The Anglo-Russian arrangements which preceded the meeting of the monarchs at Reval dealt purely with Central Asiatic questions, and did not in any sense make allowance for transcendental political aspirations on Russia's part. Russian economists and railway engineers, who had a free hand in Persian territory, could appreciate their advantages; but the Russian imperialist, always chasing fugitive and intangible aims, remained unsatisfied. He was bound to be galvanized into renewed activity as soon as it dawned upon him that, in spite of the existence of the Anglo-Russia Convention, avenues leading to his transitory aims, which had previously appeared passable to him, were now blocked.

The Anglo-Russian arrangement failed to tackle the problem of the Near East, and therein lay its weakness—as became evident to Churchill only during the war. While a delimitation of the spheres of influence had been effected in Central Asia, and a comparatively stable ratio of power between Russia and Japan had been attained in the Far East, questions regarding the Dardanelles, the Bagdad Railway, and the future of European Turkey were left unsettled in 1907—they were not even discussed. Turkey was in a state of political and economic disruption, and Grey and Isvolsky were inclined to evade decisions which did not call for immediate attention, of which the problem of the Near East was a case in point.

King Edward, in contradistinction to his advisers and perhaps as the outcome of his intimate relations with Cassel

and the Rothschilds, had a clearer—or shall we say more Bismarckian—conception of the latent political significance of the Near Eastern problem. It is characteristic of the King's political perspicacity that, even before the Berlin Congress, he had pressed Disraeli and Salisbury for a final and permanent solution of this problem, and that during the first years of his reign, at a time of comparative quiet in continental affairs, he repeatedly encouraged Lansdowne to increased activity in Near Eastern questions.

Lansdowne did not take seriously enough the advice of his wise King, probably because Russia had her hands tied by the war with Japan. Although in a lesser degree than Grey, he also was inclined to address himself only to problems when they appeared in a sharply defined and acute form. To attack latent possibilities of conflict and deal with them conclusively, which was the King's characteristic "personal" contribution to England's foreign policy, was too far removed from this statesman's practice. Edward VII, however, had for several decades instinctively felt that the most acute threat of war, if not the next war, would eventuate not from the direct clash between European great Powers, but from embroilments, wanted or unwanted, of European great Powers on opposing sides in a Balkan conflict.

The first indications of the approach of war threats from the Near East became discernible in the autumn of 1907 on the occasion of a visit of the Kaiser to Windsor, immediately after the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention. The Kaiser exerted himself in negotiations with Haldane to obtain a withdrawal of the British opposition to the extension of the Bagdad Railway as far as the Persian Gulf. Haldane pointed out that Britain was also interested in the question of the railway terminus on the Persian Gulf, as such a terminus would constitute an important strategic point in the defence of India, and that, moreover, it was impossible

for Britain to enter into negotiations with any other Power regarding the Bagdad Railway without calling in France and Russia, with whom she was on terms of friendship and who had also to safeguard certain interests of their own in those regions. The Kaiser expressed his readiness to make allowances for strategic needs, but, in view of the probable opposition of public opinion in Germany, he at first declined French and Russian participation in the railway negotiations. The Foreign Secretary, von Schön, who accompanied the Kaiser, overcame this difficulty by telling Haldane that he had already promised Isvolsky that Russia should participate. It was further agreed in conversations between Schön and Grey that Germany should convene the Four-Power Conference.

The King, who anticipated that the Kaiser's opposition to their participation would prevail, had therefore no confidence in the sudden readiness of the German Ministers to include France and Russia, and he assumed a negative attitude in the face of all attempts by the Kaiser to get him to commit himself, referring him on each occasion to Haldane, the Minister in charge of these negotiations. The King's distrust proved to be justified. The Kaiser had barely returned to Berlin when Bülow was called upon to strike a blow at the Four-Power Conference. The Chancellor, in consonance with the views already expressed by the Kaiser at Windsor, declared that Germany could only discuss the question of the railway terminus on the Gulf of Persia *à deux* with Britain, and that she was unable to go into the matter with France and Russia "because such negotiations would only serve to accentuate the differences between these countries and Germany."

Thus was shattered the King's last attempt to satisfy German economic expansionist aspirations and at the same time solve the Near Eastern problem on a comprehensive scale—

for there is no doubt that the discussion of the German railway project would have led to the adjustment and compensatory treatment of the Near Eastern interests of these four great Powers. It is even questionable whether Aehrenthal would have carried out the annexation of Bosnia the following year, as a surprise coup and behind the backs of most of the Powers, if the Austrian Government had realized that Turkey, as a result of the negotiations initiated by Britain regarding the Bagdad Railway, was no longer the apple of discord of the *de facto* great Powers, but that the latter had arrived at a settlement of their interests. It is quite probable that Aehrenthal's and Francis Ferdinand's expansionist plans would not have been put into execution with the same amount of provocation if Germany's railway projects had first been realized.

While in 1907 Grey and Isvolsky were preparing the Anglo-Russian Convention, which left the problem of the Near East out of account, the Young Turk movement, furthered by these same negotiations, had grown from a band of conspirators into a political power. Turks of all shades of political opinion had for a century relied on Anglo-Russian antagonism, acute or latent, as the most solid foundation for Turkey's existence. So long as it was practically certain that Britain and Russia could be found in separate or opposing camps in Europe, neither of these two countries could concede to the other a preponderating influence on the Straits or in Asia Minor. If a political reconciliation were effected between Britain and Russia, according to Turkish conceptions and in view of the historical past of the two countries, this could logically only materialize if at the same time the Near Eastern interests had come up for settlement, and that in a pan-Slavic, Russian sense.

After the Reval meeting, it was persistently rumoured that Britain and Russia had agreed on Macedonian reforms. The

Young Turks, who had meanwhile set up their Committee of Action in Salonica, decided to forestall the great Powers by transforming Turkey into a constitutional State and thus obviating demands for reform which would violate the sovereignty of their country. A few months after the Reval meeting the old régime collapsed and the Turkish liberal constitution of 1876 was put into force. In Turkey there followed the fraternizing of nationalities and religions which occasioned Grey's undiscerning verdict that Macedonian and other questions "would now disappear from European politics."

Warned by secret agents in Vienna and Sofia, King Edward was less optimistic than his Foreign Minister, and he decided in August 1908 to visit not only the German Kaiser, but also the Austrian Emperor on his way to Marienbad. On 11th August Edward VII and William II discussed in Cronberg all subjects which were likely to be of common interest to Britain and Germany. Neither the monarchs nor their diplomatic experts touched upon the impending sensational Near Eastern events; at any rate the German participants in the Cronberg conversations gave the Englishmen the impression that at the moment—that is on the eve of events which might easily have provoked a world war—Germany had no knowledge whatever of any Austrian designs.

On 13th August King Edward and Emperor Francis Joseph had a conversation at Ischl. Edward expressed openly to the old Emperor his anxiety regarding the Anglo-German naval competition, and he asked the Austrian ruler to use his influence with the Kaiser in favour of a reasonable naval compromise with Britain. The old Emperor declined this proposal, as William II had in the meantime telegraphed from Cronberg that King Edward would probably make an attempt to get the Austrian Emperor on his side and so isolate Germany. In the conversations between King Edward and

Emperor Francis Joseph, as well as in those between Aehrenthal and Hardinge, nothing but assurances of peace were exchanged and the brightness of the political outlook commented upon.

On 15th August Edward VII met in Marienbad the Vienna correspondent of *The Times,* Mr. Wickham Steed, who informed him that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was imminent. But the King's mind had been set entirely at ease by the amicable tenour of his conversations with William II and the Austrian Emperor, and he replied to the English journalist:

"I cannot believe that. It would upset the whole of Europe. What proof have you? The Emperor Francis Joseph gave me no hint of anything of the sort. No, I cannot believe that."

Steed assured the King that "annexation was in the air," though it was impossible to prove such things. Thereupon the King remarked that he was still of the opinion that Steed was mistaken and added: "Surely the Emperor would have said something to me."

Steed had been correctly informed. On 18th August it was decided in Ischl that Aehrenthal's annexation proposal should be carried out, although this decision was to be kept secret for the moment. In the form of a communication from his cousin, the Prince of Bulgaria, to the effect that he would soon have himself proclaimed independent Czar of his country, the King had also received indirect confirmation of the report that aggressive moves and alterations in the political balance of power on the Balkans were imminent. The King was well aware that Ferdinand of Bulgaria had become a pawn on the chessboard of Austrian politics.

CHAPTER VI

# THE BOSNIAN CRISIS

On 29th September 1908 Emperor Francis Joseph signed the "personally written" letters composed by Aehrenthal—in which he announced to the Monarchs and Presidents of those countries which had signed the Treaty of Berlin in 1877 his intention to evacuate Novi-Bazar and annex Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The letters were to be simultaneously delivered to the recipients by the Austrian Ambassadors on 5th October. Without informing Vienna, the Austrian Ambassador in Paris delivered the Emperor's letter to President Fallières on 3rd October, because the latter was about to start on a journey.

Fallières asked the Ambassador when Bulgaria would declare her independence and Ferdinand be proclaimed Czar. The Ambassador promptly replied that Bulgaria's independence would be announced on the same day that Austria's Annexation proclamation was made.

The French Government immediately telegraphed the Emperor's communication to London. It was lying on the desk of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Charles Hardinge, when the Austrian Ambassador, Count Mensdorff, came to the Foreign Office and requested an audience of the King for 5th October for the purpose of delivering the Imperial note. The Austrian Ambassador also handed the English diplomat a private letter from Aehrenthal, in which the Austrian Foreign Minister informed him that Austria-Hungary would shortly annex Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the same day the British Ambassador in Vienna, Goschen, visited Aehrenthal and asked him whether the declaration of Independence of Bulgaria was imminent. Aehrenthal assured him

that there was no word of truth in these rumours. There was no mention of such plans in the reports of the Austrian Minister in Sofia.

Count Mensdorff went to Balmoral to see the King and to deliver the documents, the contents of which were already known to the English monarch. The King received the Ambassador, glanced through the letter, and then dismissed him in disfavour. In his Memoirs, Lord Redesdale describes as follows the impression made by the news of the annexation: "No one who was there can forget how terribly he was upset. Never did I see him so moved. He had paid the Emperor of Austria a visit at Ischl less than two months before. The meeting had been friendly and affectionate, ending with a hearty *'auf baldiges Wiedersehen.'* . . . The two sovereigns and their two statesmen had discussed the Eastern question—especially the Balkan difficulties—with the utmost apparent intimacy, and the King left Ischl in the full assurance that there was no cloud on the horizon. Now, without a word of warning, all was changed."

William II, who even during the World War only regarded the German Eastern policy from the point of view of establishing dukedoms on the Baltic for his sons, designated the proclamation of the Bulgarian Czar as an intrigue of Edward VII's against Turkey and against Germany's position in the East. He recommended the Chancellor to investigate at once the possibility of an alliance between Germany, Roumania, Turkey and Greece against an Anglo-Russo-Bulgarian combination.

Early in October 1908 there were as many lies told in Berlin as in Vienna. British diplomats who enquired whether Germany had had any knowledge of the Austrian plans, were told that the Kaiser was just as upset by the events as was King Edward. The Kaiser was offended because Germany had not been acquainted with Austria's plans before other

countries. These statements were in direct opposition to the truth, which has since been established by the publication of the German official documents.

In the beginning of September, the Secretary of State, von Schön, reported to the Chancellor, Bülow, a conversation which he had had with Aehrenthal on 4th September 1908 in Berchtesgaden. In the course of this conversation Aehrenthal stated that Austria-Hungary would shortly be obliged to settle the Bosnia-Herzegovina question, and that the only possible solution would be annexation. This report was read and signed by the Kaiser.

When William II noticed the unfavourable impression made in Russia by Austria's move, Berlin's attitude veered round. The chief culprit was no longer the wily uncle, but the careless Austrian Foreign Minister. The Kaiser minuted a report of Bülow's to the effect that he was very sorry that the incredible stupidity of Aehrenthal had placed him in a position of not being able to protect and support his friends the Turks, as they had been injured by an ally of Germany. He was obliged to stand by and see England counselling Turkey, and doing it with the very arguments which he himself would have used, arguments which were incontestably sound in international law. A great triumph for Edward VII!

In a letter to the Czar on 5th January 1909, the Kaiser stated that the annexation had greatly surprised him, for Germany had been informed of it later than Russia. Austria had made her decision without asking Germany's advice, but as a loyal ally Germany must now accept the decision, for she could not join Austria's adversaries. This strange discretion on the part of German politics and diplomacy, in contrast to the nervous activity of Austria, was already noticeable during the Bosnian crisis. The Germans knew that an important and dangerous stroke was being prepared, but, so as to be able to appear officially ignorant, they preferred

to know nothing about the details. On the other hand, they accepted in the fullest sense the obligations of the Alliance, though these might arise from political actions in which they had merely played a passive rôle.

In the further course of the Bosnian crisis, the King vigorously advocated the discussion of the Eastern questions at a Conference of the great Powers. He further suggested that Russia should be compensated for the increased power of Austria and her satrapy Bulgaria by an alteration of the terms of the Straits Convention, which would give to Russian warships the right to enter the Straits. In his correspondence with Grey and Asquith, the King reminded them continually that, in the handling of the Bosnian crisis, it was England's business not to take up a narrow-minded attitude which considered British interests alone, but to regard this vital question from the point of view of Europe as a whole.

Unfortunately for the future of Europe and for his own reputation as a far-seeing statesman, Grey could not grasp the importance of this conception of the King's. He did indeed strive for a European Conference to revise the terms of the Berlin Congress, but he had not the strength, in the interests of European Peace, to adhere to this idea in the face of Germany's determined attitude in St. Petersburg, which compelled Russia to recognize the annexation. England did not indeed recognize the annexation unconditionally; she loyally gave "diplomatic" support to isolated Serbia in her differences with Austria. But when he repulsed Metternich's veiled menace of war on the 25th March 1909, with great dignity but without advancing a single political suggestion, Grey certainly missed the psychological moment in which he might have assured European peace. Grey's reservation, by which England could only recognize the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Austro-Serbian dispute had been settled, was a proviso with a restrospective

effect but with no security for peace in the future. At this particular moment, when England, as a power not directly interested, could have rendered invaluable service to the cause of peace, she chose to evade a comprehensive discussion of the Balkan problem, which could practically have been forced on Germany at any moment, as an alternative to the war subsequently provoked by Germany and Austria. The Austro-Serbian Armistice, which was brought about through English diplomatic aid, was no solution of the Balkan problem. Grey's permanent Under Secretary, Sir Charles Hardinge, the greatest English diplomat since Disraeli, was more farsighted than his chief. In a memorandum to the King at the beginning of April 1909, he summed up the position as follows: The Serbian crisis was overcome in essentials, since Serbia, as suggested by England, had decided to send the note to Austria, and Aehrenthal undoubtedly would reply in an equally propitiatory tone. Hardinge continues significantly: "But there can be little doubt that the Serbians will deeply resent the humiliation which they have suffered at the hands of Austria, while the Russians will never be able to forget the fact that Austria and Germany availed themselves of the moment of Russia's weakness to harass her in a humiliating and hectoring manner. . . ."

And there we return to the starting point of our historical contemplation of the Eastern question. By her activities Austria had only created enemies in the Balkans and had roused to renewed activity, in the guise of pan-Slavism, Russian imperialism, which after Reval had somewhat simmered down. Whereas until the Anglo-Russian agreements of 1907 England had been the country which barred Russia's way to the Hagia Sophia, after 1909 Germany and Austria, by alternately weakening Turkey and then reviving her with camphor injections in the form of loans and military instruction, replaced England as protector of the Straits and

frontier guards against Russia's southward advance. Bismarck's famous saying that all the Balkans were not worth the bones of a Pomeranian Grenadier was left ignored, and the danger which he had summed up in the third volume of his *Thoughts and Recollections* became an actuality: "In my opinion, Germany's friendship is a surer thing than England's for the one who wins it, and I believe that, if German politics are rightly handled, England will sooner find herself in the position of needing our friendship than that we shall be in need of hers. By right handling I mean that we should not lose sight of the necessity for cultivating our relations with Russia because we feel ourselves protected at the moment against Russian attacks by the Triple Alliance. Even if this protection had been tried for a sufficient period to be considered as permanent, there would be neither sense nor justice in imposing upon the German people, through a Russian war for English or Austrian Near Eastern interests, burdens heavier and more unprofitable than those they already bear through our own German interests or those dependent on the integrity of Austria. In the Crimean War we were accused of being willing to go to war for England like Indian feudal princes. Is the stronger German Empire more dependent than when Frederick William IV appeared? Or perhaps more obliging? Maybe, but at the cost of the Empire."

Soon after his forced resignation, Bismarck's prophetic sense had warned him that William II's policy would place Germany in a position of entire dependence on Austria, in which she would have no voice in the direction of affairs. Before Bismarck hovered the terrifying phantom of an entirely isolated Germany which, misjudging her own strength and anxious to keep her last ally, Austria, would be ready to make herself a vassal to the latter, not only politically but also economically—and during Bismarck's lifetime this even-

tuality actually seemed as if it might be realized. Bismarck writes of this in Volume III of his *Thoughts and Recollections*. "Austria is more in need of an alliance with Germany than is Germany in need of one with Austria. If we consider the future of Austria, the price she would have to pay for Russia's friendship would be the abandonment of her ambitions in the East, which are responsible for the Hungarian's enmity towards Russia. Austria's possible connexion with France, and even with the United Western Powers of the Crimean League,[1] would put the Austrian monarchy in a more exposed position than any other in regard to Russia and Germany, and frustrate the Russian attempts to develop that nucleus of pro-Slavism which is to be found in the numerically larger half of the population. For Austria the German Alliance, because of the common origin of the two peoples, remains the most natural and the least dangerous. Such an alliance may even be termed an ever-recurring necessity for Austria under any and all circumstances.

"I should be sorry to see the German Empire give up the alliance with Austria, for which I have fought so strenuously, and again aim at exercising complete freedom in her European relations; but if our political love for Austria should remain unrequited unless we give practical proof of it through economic sacrifices, then I should certainly prefer the policy of complete freedom, for I am convinced that our Alliance, if conceived and carried out by Austria in such a spirit, will not be permanent, nor at a critical moment even tenable. . . .

"Public opinion is generally only able to see the faults of a foreign policy when it is in a position to review the history of the previous generation. The art of politics lies in being able to foresee correctly what other nations will do in given

[1] Here Bismarck, as early as 1892, alludes to the possibility of an Anglo-French Entente.

circumstances. The capacity for such foresight is seldom large enough not to need the support of great expert knowledge and experience in order to be effective, and I cannot but feel perturbed when I consider how far these qualities have been neglected in our leading circles. At any rate, Viennese statesmen are much better qualified in this regard than are ours, and therefore one is justified in fearing that in completing a Treaty Austrian interests will be better looked after than will ours."

# BOOK V

# A LIFE'S WORK UNFINISHED

## AGREEMENT WITHOUT PROGRAM

AFTER the Bosnian crisis the boundaries of those armed camps, which attacked each other during the World War with such fateful effect, clearly revealed themselves.

During the crisis, when Russia retreated in face of Germany's direct threat of war, England was obliged to protect Russia's friend Serbia. England was thereby compelled to play the same part in this dispute, which did not touch her directly, as the one forced upon her in 1906, at the Algeciras Conference, through the internal impotence of France. For the second time England opposed Germany in a dispute which concerned neither of them directly.

The two countries had at that time only one really vital point of friction: the growing German Fleet. As regards type and age-limit, the strength of this creation of William II and his chief Admiral, von Tirpitz, had been laid down by the Naval Bill of 1900. When the Naval Bill was drawn up, the average size of a battleship was 12,000 tons, and of an armoured cruiser 10,000 tons. These ships, the main armament of which was respectively four 12-inch and four 9½-inch guns, formed a nucleus of practically every battle fleet. Until 1905 their development was mostly in the direction of an increase of tonnage, more powerful armour, heavier ordnance and a wider radius of action. Until 1905 any statesman could, without referring to naval reports, reasonably conclude which fleet would win in a naval battle by a simple comparison of the age and number of the battleships of each belligerent, as all resembled each other in fighting strength.

The dependence upon their naval experts to which the responsible Foreign Ministers of all countries succumbed after

1905, is one of those fateful developments which, without personal or subjective guilt, contributed largely to the creation of the conditions which led to a World War.

The subjection of the statesman to the naval expert was directly due to Sir John Fisher, England's most important naval strategist since Nelson. Notwithstanding the opposition of the Cabinet and most of the Admirals, Fisher succeeded, with the moral support of King Edward, in obtaining permission to build a new type of battleship, the Dreadnought, with a displacement of nearly 18,000 tons and a heavy armament of eight 12-inch guns and a speed of nearly 21 knots. Thanks to its superior speed, this new type of battleship could give battle at a greater distance, using from eight to ten big guns per ship against only four big guns per ship of the older type, rendering the lighter armament of the older vessels practically impotent. Fisher's "super-battleship" had two results. All countries which had laid down new keels after 1905 went over to the building of the Dreadnought type so as to maintain their existing relative strength in regard to England; but from the point of view of the estimated superiority of the British Fleet, the majority of vessels then in existence had become worthless. When all the Powers went over to the building of Dreadnoughts, the old battleships no longer counted as decisive factors in naval warfare, just as frigates and brigs became obsolete when wooden ships were replaced by ironclads. Relative strength was no longer calculated in battleships and ironclads, but in Dreadnoughts. Neither from the point of view of time nor technique had England any material advantage over other countries in the building of Dreadnoughts. The alteration in the balance of naval power was most clearly revealed in the young German Fleet. The German naval program provided for the building in alternate years of four and of two new battleships.

At the request of Lloyd George and Churchill the Liberal

Government had restricted the laying down of new battleships to a maximum of four a year. Thus it was possible for the British naval imperialists to calculate at a given moment that the number of German Dreadnoughts would no longer remain in the same moderate ratio to England's Dreadnoughts as had always been the case in the proportion of the large pre-Dreadnought class of ships. As this moment drew nearer, Fisher proposed to King Edward that the same method which had been adopted in regard to the Danish Fleet, which Nelson sank in peace time in the Copenhagen Roads in 1801, should now be used with the German Fleet, which he considered was becoming dangerous. The King definitely refused to have anything to do with starting a preventive war on Germany, or with attacking her without warning. Fisher lost temporarily the royal favour, because the proposal seemed to the King entirely unfair and ungentlemanly. The Admiral gave vent to his feelings with the pious ejaculation that it was a pity there was no Pitt or Bismarck in England to order the surprise destruction of the German Fleet.

Fisher's frame of mind after the beginning of the building of Dreadnoughts was of such great importance because, like Tirpitz in Germany, he was the greatest naval expert in his own country, and the King and Cabinet had to leave to him decisions on the vital question as to how far the pre-Dreadnought fleet should be disregarded as a factor in the defence of England. The Liberal politicians, who were anxious to economize on the Army and the Navy, demanded that in comparing the English Fleet with those of other countries, the more recent pre-Dreadnought types of vessels should be included. Fisher had little understanding of such methods of calculation. For him there were two separate kinds of reckoning: relative strength in Dreadnoughts and relative strength in pre-Dreadnoughts. In his opinion, the relative strength of

Dreadnoughts decided the superiority and fighting power of a fleet. Contrary to the advice of his colleagues at the Admiralty and the admirals on the high seas, and in consideration of the German program, Fisher concentrated the newest battleships in the North Sea, built bases on the East Coast of Scotland wherein the fleet might safely lie in ambush, and was still able to show the Liberal Cabinet economies in the naval budget, for he mercilessly cleared out all the older type of ships, which were now obsolete, thereby rejuvenating and reducing the British Fleet. He may, as Tirpitz often declared, have had ulterior motives. The more of the pre-Dreadnought vessels he scrapped, the easier it was for him to confute the Liberal argument that these older constituent parts of the fleet should be included in any assessment of the relative strengths of the English and German Navies. If he showed himself ready to economize, then the Cabinet would the sooner be prepared to grant sums for building ships of the new Dreadnought type.

After the introduction of the Dreadnought type had upset the previous balance which had been so favourable to England (the relation was a minimum of two to one, or a temporary maximum of three to one, in England's favour), the chief question for England became the re-arranging of her naval defensive forces in accordance with the building plans of other Powers.

By urging the politicians and military authorities of Russia and France to concentrate their strength on the improvement of their land forces, it was comparatively easy to come to an understanding with them. The naval program of neither of these countries offered any considerable danger to England, even in the event of the Entente coming to an end. France built for the Mediterranean and trusted to England's protection of the Channel ports, whereas Russia's Fleet had practically ceased to exist after the Russo-Japanese War; it

consisted only of a few comparatively new fighting units in the Black Sea. As for America, she was considered sufficiently occupied with Japan. Thus, the fleets of the Triple Alliance only, and of those really only the German Fleet, needed to be taken into consideration in English naval strategy.

There were three absolutely different trends of thought in the English political and diplomatic handling of the naval building race between England and Germany. Disregarding the "not-to-be-discussed" Copenhagen experiment, the most primitive was the brutal military-strategic one of convincing Germany, by a large and quickly carried out program of construction, of the hopelessness of ever being able to keep pace with England in the building of battleships. After King Edward had so decisively opposed Fisher's Copenhagen plan, that most versatile seaman advocated the laying down of two or possibly three English ships for each one of Germany's capital ships. If the German naval law was considered unalterable, such a program would have brought the English Dreadnought construction up to a minimum of six and a maximum of from eight to ten ships per year. Had it been carried out, it would probably have prevented the World War. Tirpitz, a very correct judge of fleet power, has stated in his Memoirs that with practically equal fleets or even with some slight disparity, very great luck would be necessary for one to win outright. Leaving out of account improbable, and therefore not tactically calculable, favourably accidental circumstances, a thirty per cent. superiority was, in the opinion of the great German admiral, a necessary general strategic hypothesis for victory. Had Fisher's program been carried out within five years by a Liberal and by no means aggressive English Government, it would have re-established the overwhelming superiority which existed before the introduction of Dreadnoughts. With a relative strength of two and a half or three to one against him, Tirpitz would doubtless have

pointed out very forcibly to the Kaiser and his foreign political advisers the risk Germany would run, except in the case of defending herself immediately against an unprovoked attack, if she were to pick a quarrel in Europe with England amongst her adversaries.

An English policy of this description, which could only have been carried out without risk of war by an extremely peaceably minded government, a policy which, as is now definitely known, would not have frightened a man of Haldane's character, seemed impossible to the English Cabinet. The Cabinet was in the same unenviable position regarding naval questions as in regard to foreign policy as a whole. Three of the younger Ministers, Lloyd George, Churchill, and Harcourt, with a numerous following in the overgrown and almost unmanageable Party in the House of Commons and in the Press, practised a "dictatorship behind the scenes," which amounted to despotism on questions of armament. Lord Tweedmouth, an old and by now physically feeble Liberal partisan, who had been raised to the Peerage and who sat in the House of Lords and not in the Commons, was First Lord of the Admiralty. Next to him and entirely dominating him was the First Sea Lord, Sir John Fisher, the friend and favourite of the King. Tweedmouth, who died of a disease of the brain after three years in office, was completely unsuited to represent a policy which could only be carried out by a man with great personal vigour and a clear object in view. Unbelievably inexperienced in naval affairs, Tweedmouth was almost afraid of the dynamic Fisher. Instead of following, for better or worse, the one clear head at his disposal, he was continually in a state of vacillation. In the Cabinet he was at the mercy of the mathematical tricks and threats of resignation of the political *enfants terribles*, and at the Admiralty, Wilson, Scott and Beresford shook his faith in Fisher. Fisher had not only succeeded in his Dreadnought policy,

but he had also introduced other reforms, especially with regard to organization and training, in the face of severe opposition from older and more orthodox theorists and experts. But Beresford had stated, among other things, that Fisher by his regulations had neglected the interests of the defence of the realm in the most wanton manner. Beresford's intrigues and the opposition to Fisher became so violent that in 1909, after Tweedmouth had been replaced by McKenna, a sub-committee of the Council of Imperial Defence was appointed, as a kind of Court of honour and arbitration, to enquire into the accusations which Fisher and Beresford had brought against each other.

These differences among the naval chiefs, who for years indulged in the most spiteful personalities, easily lent themselves to exploitation by such clever political tacticians as Lloyd George and Churchill. Grey, who himself believed in a large fleet as a reliable backing for any effective British foreign policy, repeatedly gave way between 1905 and 1908 to the requests of the *enfants terribles* to economize in the naval budget, and, while keeping the British program down to the very lowest figure, barely compatible with the necessities of the defence of the realm, to make advances to Germany regarding a settlement of the question of a numerical naval ratio. Lloyd George and Churchill stated that they did not believe in a "German danger," and that there was no occasion for the Government to agree to the demands for armaments made by admirals who could not agree amongst themselves, demands which were not justified by Germany's attitude, and the granting of which would stand in the way of much needed social reforms.

This point of view of these "young geniuses" was naturally the more attractive as Tweedmouth proved incapable of presenting the Admiral's point of view of the matter with any conviction, and Grey, in order to protect his Foreign

policy from their frequent attacks, was inclined to agree with Lloyd George and Churchill on naval questions. The result of this understandable obscurity which reigned in naval circles and in the Government regarding the Fleet, was an equally obscure and fatuous period of attempts at an agreement with Germany on naval construction.

The only person in England who possessed the necessary understanding for a possible solution of the existing difficulties was the King. He had a definite line of policy, but unfortunately he stood alone, and his Ministers followed a weak policy which was foredoomed to failure. With regard to Anglo-German relations, the King held the same view—which he had held when he was Prince of Wales—as on the colonial question, that the settlement of interests must precede protestations of friendship. While the King agreed with Fisher that the strength of the British Fleet, as the deciding weapon in England's defence, should not be fixed exclusively by foreign political considerations, but rather for military-strategic reasons, he by no means rejected altogether the idea of a settlement of an Anglo-German naval ratio.

In contrast to Grey, the King knew intuitively whether or not the right moment had arrived to take a political step—which step may of course have been theoretically quite correct. When the Liberal Government came into power, the Russo-Japanese War was just ended, but the Morocco crisis which Germany had provoked was not yet settled. As France's able second at the Algeciras Conference, England was at that time anything but popular in Germany. Germany, who had just "convinced herself" of Russia's and France's weakness, was, in the King's opinion, by no means in the frame of mind to consider the Liberal plan of disarmament and a naval agreement. Had the King had his way, England and Germany would first have come to an agreement on colonial and Near Eastern questions, which would have

had greater obvious advantages, both politically and economically, for England as well as for Germany. After the consummation of such agreements, whereby the German people would have been convinced that England had no wish to rob them of "a place in the Sun," it would have been far easier to agree upon a naval formula. While England and Germany were arranging their mutual colonial interests, England could have laid down those ships necessary to maintain a clear English superiority without letting herself be flustered by Germany's building program or the shouts of her own pacifists.

It was clear to the King that firmness, dignity, and material concessions regarding Germany's just interests would be more efficacious in inducing the inconstant German Kaiser to agreements and settlements than the pacific gestures and assurances of the Liberal Cabinet, which were not accompanied by any practical accommodation to German demands. The diplomatic history of the last five years before the World War once more proved him absolutely right.

## THE FAILURE OF THE DIPLOMATS

THE King's uncertainty as to whether the beginning of 1906 might be favourable for a proposal by England for an Anglo-German Naval Agreement, which would not intrude upon political territory, was by no means exclusively due to the existence of the still unsolved Moroccan question. At the end of 1904 relations between Germany and England were so bad that the German Military Attaché in London, Count von Schulenburg, reported home on 13th December that, although there was no need to fear it immediately, war with England would undoubtedly come. He did not believe that the English King or the British Government would declare war against Germany, but Germany must be prepared for war, for it was unlikely that friendly relations would again be established between the two countries. The Military Attaché recommended the German-Russian alliance, later attempted by the Kaiser in Björkö, as a means of intimidating England.

At the beginning of 1905, King Edward discussed the rumours of war in detail with the German Naval Attaché in London, Captain Coerper. During this conference the King emphasized the fact that it was inconceivable to him how Germany could expect an English attack. The Naval Attaché explained that this fear had probably been aroused by the new distribution of the British naval fighting forces. Edward commissioned the Naval Attaché to tell the Kaiser that England was determined to live at peace with all nations, that she was not preparing war against any country, and least of all against Germany, as there was no reason for such a war, which would do infinite harm to both. In the course of this conversation, the King laid emphasis on the fact that the

general impression in England was that the enlargement of the German Fleet exceeded Germany's naval strategic requirements.

In his *Reminiscences* Tirpitz has given a psychological explanation of the English conception. He writes: "Our naval program was first regarded in a different light in the year 1904. At that time every vessel we possessed was paraded before Edward VII, through no wish of mine, at Kiel week, and the Kaiser mentioned in his toast 'the reinforced naval importance of the reborn German Empire.' King Edward replied calmly, and during the inspection of our vessels he exchanged significant looks and words, which I did not like, with Selborne, the First Lord of the Admiralty. The English were uneasy because out of small means we were producing so much, and showed an organic development better organized than their own. They were again confronted by the dangerous German method of patiently 'building stone by stone.' That subsequent concentration of the British squadron was directed against us, was emphasized in February 1905, in a speech by Lee, First Civil Lord of the Admiralty, who declared, without any conceivable reason for so doing, that the British Fleet would know how to deal the first blow, should occasion arise, before the people on the other side of the North Sea had even had time to read of the declaration of war in the newspapers."

In the speech, referred to by Admiral von Tirpitz, which contradicted the King's previously expressed intentions, Lord Lee, an intimate friend of Fisher, advocated Fisher's Copenhagen plan entirely on his own account. That England's apparently warlike attitude was in reality a nervousness which she sought to hide by "talking big" is revealed by Count Eulenburg's report of 15th December 1904, to Bülow, Chancellor of the Reich, wherein he points out that, according to impressions he received in London, there was a wide-

spread feeling in England that Germany was planning an attack on her.

In this atmosphere, artificially sustained in both countries by books about the future war in which German landings in England and English landings in Germany were fully described, the imperial demonstration at Tangier acted as a spark in a powder magazine. On 15th April 1905, King Edward wrote regarding the demonstration at Tangier:

> "The Tangier incident was the most mischievous and uncalled for event which the German Emperor has ever been engaged in since he came to the throne. It was also a political theatrical fiasco, and if he thinks he has done himself good in the eyes of the world he is very much mistaken. He is no more nor less than a political *enfant terrible* and one can have no faith in any of his assurances. His own pleasure seems to wish to set every country by the ears."

The atmosphere on the German side was just as suspicious and unsuitable for reasonable negotiations. On this point Tirpitz writes in his *Reminiscences:* "England's attitude during 1904–05 proved that she had then a strong inclination to ruin Germany's entire world position by an act of war. It is easy to understand these warlike inclinations, for they did not involve England in any risk. The Admiralty hoped, however, to checkmate our naval undertaking, which was then in its beginnings, by turning in 1905 to the building of ships of the Dreadnought class, on the assumption that the German Navy would not be able to pass similar immense vessels through the Kiel Canal. This chain of political and naval menaces, combined with a violent stirring up of public feeling, caused justifiable astonishment in wide circles in Germany."

A MOMENTOUS INTERVIEW

Kaiser Wilhelm. "Delighted to see you, Uncle, at Kiel. And now, as there are neither cabinet ministers nor reporters present, I think I might perhaps mention that—the sea is calm, and it is splendid weather for the yacht races."

From *Punch*, June 22, 1904

The Kaiser ordered Tirpitz to prepare a rather extensive Naval Bill, which Tirpitz refused under threat of resignation in view of the danger of a "Copenhagen-like *coup de main*" on England's part, through the unreasonable provocation of the naval imperialists. The Kaiser, true to the attitude he had taken up regarding the Jameson raid and the sending of the Kruger dispatch, decided to substitute gesture for politics. In August 1905 he wrote to the Czar, on the occasion of an English's squadron's visit to the German seaports on the Baltic:

> "I have ordered my fleet to shadow the British, and when they have anchored to lay themselves near the British fleet, to give them a dinner and make them as drunk as possible to find out what they are about; and then sail off again! I think the astonishment will be great as the English as well as our people believe that our fleet will be in the North Sea. So don't tell anybody, for the secret must be well kept."

The Fleets met on the high seas of Swinemunde, and their encounter passed without incident and without excessive consumption of alcohol.

In this atmosphere Grey considered it suitable to propose to the German Ambassador, Count Metternich, that Germany and England should agree to a naval ratio of respectively three to five. The proposal was refused by Germany, and considering the state of mind of the naval experts on both sides of the North Sea at that time it could never have been realized, even if the German Chancellor, following Metternich's advice, had been of Grey's way of thinking. On the one side stood Fisher, ready for a crisis, on the other side Tirpitz, compelled to stake his career in an effort to prevent the Kaiser from acting rashly. Grey had provoked the re-

fusal he got by his lack of understanding of the psychological conditions necessary for extremely delicate diplomatic negotiations.

Germany's refusal and the fact that a Naval Bill (which increased the number of cruisers by six only) was subsequently passed by the Reichstag, strengthened Fisher in the belief that the whole of England's naval armament must be directed exclusively against Germany, because Germany had secret aggressive designs against England. Fisher's proposal for the complete concentration of the British Battle Fleet in the North Sea led to a lively controversy in the British Navy. Even the present King—then heir to the throne—who had completed his service as a naval officer, joined in the discussion and enquired the reason for Fisher's instructions, which were so much the more likely to have a disturbing effect in England since they were given at a time when naval expenditure was being reduced. In a report which Fisher conveyed to the Prince of Wales, he demonstrated that England's only "probable" enemy was Germany. Germany had concentrated its entire Fleet in Wilhelmshafen a few hours distant from England. England must therefore concentrate a Fleet of twice the strength a few hours distant from Germany. Such a fleet for home defence could only be formed when six battleships and four armoured cruisers were taken from the Channel, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Fleets, which were about fifty per cent. stronger than the political situation in their waters warranted, and with these and the best reserve vessels form an élite squadron. The Best British Admiral should be appointed Commander, and the manœuvring ground of the squadron should be the North Sea, where the decisive battle would take place—perhaps in the neighbourhood of Heligoland, which, once won by the sword, had been ceded to Germany by the pen. Fisher added that the clamour for an increase of the naval budget was dictated only by Party

considerations. A reduction of naval expenditure by no means meant a less efficient Navy. Excessively swollen naval budgets only meant that there were parasites in the Fleet, in the form of both ships and men, which detracted from its fighting strength. The pruning-knife was unpleasant for fossils and for the incompetent, but it had to be employed, and the tree would be all the more vigorous after it had been rid of its excrescences.

The heir to the throne was convinced by Fisher, but the Foreign Office protested, because it feared that there would not be enough vessels available for the defence of British interests overseas. To this objection, which the King brought to Fisher's notice, the old sea-dog replied that the Admiralty always knew better than the Foreign Office and the Consuls abroad when vessels were needed for foreign service, because the commanding naval officer on the spot was a much more reliable judge of the situation than easily alarmed "gun-boat demanding" consuls, who were always aching for a man-of-war to be near their consular flagstaff, and who were flattered by the salute of seven guns which was their due. To this, Fisher added that Germany was preparing for a war in the near future. Germany was the only power whose political organization and fighting force could be set going by one man—the Kaiser—pressing a button, and which could be depended upon to fling its whole force on the enemy immediately, without resistance or warning. This button would only be pressed in Germany if the Channel and Atlantic Fleets were on the high seas at a greater distance from German waters. After considerable deliberation the King, although he never pretended to be a military expert, reached a decision in Fisher's favour. In March 1907, the British Fleet was grouped according to Fisher's proposal.

The controversy in the English Press and among the English naval experts over the expediency of Fisher's proposals

gave William II occasion, in a highly amusing roundabout way, to make an amateurish attempt on his side to intervene in the Anglo-German naval rivalry by "conciliatory diplomacy." The Navy League, which was not in agreement with Fisher's Budget policy and which believed that England's defence was being neglected, invited Lord Esher, the King's personal friend, to become President of the League. Esher declined, as he rightly felt that the aim of this invitation was to play him as a civilian, but as the King's confidant, off against the King's other friend, Fisher. In a letter to *The Times,* Esher explained that he would not be a party to an intrigue against Fisher, and in his letter declared that everyone in Germany, from the Kaiser downwards, would rejoice at Fisher's downfall. That alone was reason enough for him not to identify himself with the Navy League's efforts against Fisher.

As a result of this harmless phrase the Kaiser wrote in the middle of February 1908, a furious personal letter to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Tweedmouth, who was very ill and at that time was regarded in Liberal circles as being no longer of completely sound mind. In this letter the Kaiser repudiated Esher's imputed accusation that Germany was aiming at Fisher's downfall; he furthermore stressed the point that the German Naval Bill of 1908, which provided that the life of battleships be cut down from twenty-five to twenty years in conformity with the practice of other great powers, could not present a challenge to British naval supremacy. Lord Tweedmouth showed the Kaiser's letter to the King and to Sir Edward Grey. The King wrote a short letter to the Kaiser, in which he pointed out that the Kaiser's correspondence with an English Minister of the Crown created an entirely new precedent in diplomatic intercourse, and that the Minister could not prevent the English Press from pointing out the necessity for Britain to take counter-measures

in view of German naval preparations. The maladroitness of the Kaiser in applying directly to the English Cabinet Minister, and thereby flouting the machinery of diplomacy, shortly before the debate on the British Navy estimates, raised a storm in Parliament and in the Press. *The Times* protested against the attempt of a foreign ruler to influence an English Minister's decisions. But unknown to the wider public Tweedmouth had surpassed the Kaiser in stupidity, for, in his written reply to the German monarch, in order to prove England's peaceful intentions, he revealed what he anticipated would be the program of construction and the Naval Estimates for the next financial year, before they were available to the House of Commons.

While the clamour was at its height in England, Metternich and Bülow believed the best way of handling the situation would be to publish the Kaiser's letter to Tweedmouth. It appeared that Prince Bülow did not even know of the letter's existence until he saw the English papers, and when the Kaiser had placed a copy of the letter at the Chancellor's disposal, it was feared that publication might lead to far-reaching complications. Although the publication of the correspondence between Tweedmouth and William II was demanded in the English Parliament, the Government could, with the help of the Conservative leaders, dispose of the incident without publishing the letters, since Tweedmouth had committed the blunder of mentioning the estimates in his reply.

Lord Rosebery, the Liberal leader in the House of Lords, expressed the general feeling when he declared that he feared they were making themselves ridiculous by the agitation over the correspondence. A great many false conclusions had already been drawn from it. A certain section of the Press was seeking to create bad blood between the two peoples. The correspondence was merely an unfortunate incident, but

these papers took advantage of every trifle in order to create a morbid mistrust between the two nations, a mistrust that threatened European peace. There was no logical reason why England's friendship with France should result in a hostile attitude towards Germany.

Fisher did not regard the incident so calmly, and he wrote to the King that it seemed as if the Kaiser wanted to repeat the Delcassé manœuvre. Grey asked the German Ambassador what the feeling would be in Germany if the King of England approached the Grand Admiral von Tirpitz directly in a departmental affair. Hardinge, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, expressed the view that it could now be taken for granted that the Kaiser would never again write a private letter to an English Minister, ironically adding that the Kaiser's indiscretion had already been fatal to President Kruger and Count Goluchowski. Tweedmouth had got out of it comparatively well.

While the Kaiser's intervention had only created suspicion and discord in moderate English circles, and doubtlessly had strengthened the influence of the anti-German naval experts, only personal embitterment and no understanding of the breach of etiquette prevailed at the Kaiser's Court. Without having the slightest evidence in favour of his assertion, the Kaiser suggested that stinging articles which appeared in the English Press were inspired by his uncle; and on a very serious report by Metternich, urgently drawing attention to the fears evoked in England by the German naval construction policy, he wrote a marginal note to the effect that the English naval panic was due, not to the German Fleet, but to the perfectly crazy Dreadnought policy of Fisher and the English King, who hoped thereby to create difficulties for Germany. These two men and the misguided British would now realize that by building Dreadnoughts they had lost their old naval superiority, since all countries were following them

in this policy. The British were becoming uneasy. They would, however, have to get accustomed to the German Navy, but one might assure them from time to time that it was not directed against England.

Meanwhile Grey's position in the Cabinet was becoming more and more difficult. Lloyd George, Churchill and Harcourt, opposed even the most necessary naval construction, arguing that the Kaiser's letter to Tweedmouth, the assurances in which they implicitly believed, proved the complete inoffensiveness of the German naval policy. Grey would agree to their claims for economy only if it were possible to secure Germany's promise of a fixed ratio of construction for a number of years.

To achieve his object Grey resolved to use the heaviest artillery of English diplomacy, which had so far never failed to be effective: the King's personality and diplomatic skill. On his journey to Marienbad in August 1908, the King was to return the visit which the Kaiser had paid him in the autumn of the preceding year, and Grey sent him a Memorandum which he should either discuss verbally with the Kaiser or hand him as a basis for diplomatic negotiations. The King had the gravest doubts of the wisdom of Grey's plan. He knew that the sympathy which had paved the way for him to foreign statesmen and nations was of no avail in the case of the German monarch. Furthermore, he knew his nephew well enough to realize that he would be specially irritable after the failure of the Tweedmouth correspondence, which he had felt to be a personal defeat. Grey insisted on the scheme outlined in his Memorandum, the most important passages of which ran as follows: [1]

"The real difficulty is not in the present relations of the two countries, but in a certain anxiety as to their probable

[1] Lee: *King Edward VII*, Vol. II., p. 616.

relations with each other a few years hence. A section of opinion in each country speaks and writes as if Germany and England were bound to entertain, increasingly as years go on, unfriendly designs upon each other. In neither country does this opinion appear to be encouraged, on the contrary it is deprecated by the authorities; but it persists, and has come now to found itself upon the rivalry in naval expenditure, the growth of which is now taken by public opinion as the test of what the prospective relations of the two countries are likely to be. Should naval expenditure increase, apprehension will be intensified; if the expenditure were slackened apprehension would at once diminish.

"The British Government would not think of questioning the right of Germany to build as large a navy as she thinks necessary for her own purposes, nor would they complain of it. But they have to face the fact that at the present rate of construction the German naval program will, in a very few years, place the German navy in a position of superiority to the British as regards the most powerful type of battleship.

"This will necessitate a new British program of construction to be begun next year. It will be demanded by public opinion: it must avowedly be accounted for solely by reference to the German program; for the other nations of Europe are either not adding appreciably to their navies or have no navies of importance; and nations outside Europe are too distant or have no armies sufficient to threaten the independence of Great Britain.

"Whereas, if the German navy became superior or even attained such a relative proportion of the British as to enable it at an untoward moment to secure command of the sea for a few days, Great Britain would be not only defeated but occupied and conquered; Germany does not run so great a risk as this from any superiority

of the British fleet, for the British Army is so inferior to the German in size that occupation and conquest are out of the question. Without, therefore, attributing any sinister motive to the building of the German fleet it is a paramount necessity to increase British naval expenditure to meet the German program, though we fear that this may be taken as a sign of increasing rivalry and distrust, and though we regret anything which is likely to be a barrier to better feeling.

"On the other hand a slackening of naval expenditure on both sides would at once be followed by a great rebound in public opinion towards friendly feeling and security. . . . It would be welcomed not in Germany and England alone but everywhere as evidence of pacific intentions, of good understanding and confidence between the two countries. Rightly or wrongly a great part of the world has come of late years to concentrate attention upon the relations between England and Germany, to look in them for the chief indication of whether the peace of the world is likely to be disturbed, and to estimate this by their rivalry in naval expenditure. If this rivalry diminished, still more if the two countries came to any agreement about it, there would be increased confidence throughout the world, a general sense of security such as no other event could produce, and the Emperor and King would stand together before the world as the great peacemakers.

"It is not desired to force any discussion of this question even in private, if this is deprecated by the Emperor, but the subject is too important not to be mentioned, when the prospect of a visit of the King to Berlin next year is likely to be discussed."

At the first conference between uncle and nephew, on 11th August 1908, the King incidentally mentioned that his For-

eign Minister had given him a Memorandum regarding the naval expenditure of both countries. The Kaiser did not rise to the bait but immediately changed the subject. The King kept the Memorandum in his pocket and thereby saved himself from a severe personal defeat. Hardinge took advantage of a conversation he had with the Kaiser and verbally advanced the general ideas of the Memorandum, but this caused William II to fly into a passion. That the English diplomats had again chosen the wrong moment for broaching the naval questions is evident from a minute which the Kaiser added on 16th July 1908, to a report by Count Metternich from London, in which William II gives the following direction for the instructions to the Ambassador:

"It must be indicated to him that good relationship to England is not wanted by me at the price of the building of Germany's fleet. If England intends to offer us her hand in condescension with a hint that we must reduce our fleet, that is a bottomless impertinence which involves a grave insult to the German nation and its Kaiser which must be repelled by the Ambassador *a limine*. With the same right France and Russia could then demand a limitation of our land armaments. As soon as one allows a foreign state, under whatever pretext, to interfere with one's armaments, one abdicates like Portugal and Spain. The German fleet is not built against any one, and, therefore not against England, but according to our own necessity. That is said quite clearly in the Naval Law, and has remained unchallenged for eleven years. This law will be carried out to the last tittle; whether the Britons like it or not does not matter. If they want war let them begin it; we are not afraid."

In spite of the failure of Grey's second direct attempt to bring about a naval agreement, the King, a few days later in his conversation with the Austrian Emperor at Ischl, made yet another effort to bring about, through the Emperor's intervention, a discussion of the relative strength of the navies. He thus confirmed the opinion which Metternich had expressed a few weeks previously in a report to Bülow, that the mass of the English people desired peace and that this was also King Edward's policy. The Kaiser minuted this statement:

> "Untrue. He aims at war. I am to begin it, so that he does not get the odium."

Tirpitz understood more correctly the tragic misunderstanding into which the German policy was bound to fall through its Imperial exponent. He wrote in his *Reminiscences:* "It was a general fundamental fault of the policy of our time to spoil little by little the great, but yet not sufficient, appearance of power which Bismarck left us, by repeated demonstrations, through which was revealed our love of peace but also our nervousness, so that, when our absolute collapse followed, the enemy could ascribe to us the fatal characteristic of being *poltron valeureux*. This bad habit of melodramatic interferences—from Shimonoseki, the Kruger telegram, Manilla, the Chinese expedition, Tangiers, to Agadir and others—ended with the crowning blunder, the ultimatum to Serbia in July 1914. This method was suffered for a long time, thanks to the respect which the old Prussian state and the efficiency of the German nation inspired. But it would have been safer to expand quietly and to gain greater power, for in 1914 we stood close to the goal which would have made the mere existence of our

power sufficient to keep the peace without a tremor. The tragedy was that our policy, the most pacific in the world, believed that our unfavourable position could be improved by gestures, which only furnished malevolent enemies with pretexts for ascribing to us a desire for war, a misrepresentation of our intentions which was one of the most atrocious calumnies in the history of the world.

CHAPTER III

# THE RETURN TO REALITY

KING EDWARD'S political success was based on the fact that English attempts to transform traditional enmities into friendships or community of interests, were successful because correct assumptions were acted upon in their proper order. No visionary, least of all in his peace policy, the King had learned during the sixty odd years of his life, not only from his own experiences but also from observing the actions of other countries' representatives, that in negotiations the opposing party would not be convinced by friendly acts or protestations of friendship until its favourite wishes or demands for prestige had been materially gratified—at least apparently, but better still actually.

The naval policy of the Liberal Cabinet had drifted away entirely from the firm foundation of such a sensible attitude. For Party reasons, Grey hoped to satisfy Lloyd George and Churchill by spending as little as possible on naval building. Germany was young in world politics, but growing richer year by year, and its taxation did not develop anything like so rapidly as its national income; it was therefore reasonable to assume that it would create an instrument to secure the increasing prosperity it gained from economic competitors abroad. For a nation with the third greatest commercial fleet, the third greatest share of world commerce, thriving colonies and great investments abroad, a fleet was by no means the "expensive toy" which English Liberals liked to assume. A curtailment of her naval building program could not be made acceptable to such a nation as Germany by empty talk about reassuring the world's "nerves," but by a substantial recognition of her vital needs. Germany needed

colonies, protection for her shipping in case of war—whether she was engaged in it herself or whether it was between others—as well as the possibility of political power to protect her foreign possessions and investments. All these real aims, which, quite independent of the Emperor's prestige policy, explained the readiness of the German people to make sacrifices for the building of a navy, could be attained by arrangements with England about the Near East, the Portuguese colonies, the demarcation of spheres of interest in South America, and a reform of the regulations governing the freedom of the seas and international blockade. The nearer Germany came to realizing its aims in this direction, the sooner would the question arise in Germany as to whether, if these vital German interests were given due consideration by English competitors, naval building was worth while as a political and economic world policy; or, if the safety of German overseas interests were assured, whether naval building could not more justly be denounced as mere wilfulness and "playing at war" on the part of the German monarch. A stable British building policy, combined with a foreign policy giving due consideration to vital German interests, would have suggested to the German parties and German economists such a formulation of the problem; instead of which the Liberal Government made the unpardonable mistake—or at least so it seemed abroad during the lifetime of King Edward—of demanding from Germany a sacrifice of prestige without offering any equivalent on the part of England. The attitude of Grey and Asquith is at least tactically comprehensible, if not entirely excusable, when we take into consideration the fact that the domestic situation in England was becoming more and more acute. To carry through its domestic program, the English Government would soon or late be compelled to appeal to the people on the question of the reform of the House of Lords.

By means of a decrease in expenditure and the maintenance of "the rights of the people," the Liberals hoped to make a strong appeal to the public in their attack on the House of Lords in the case of an election. Such an election-cry would be made valueless by the Conservatives if they could point out that a vast sum of money had been spent on the Navy, while at the same time concessions had been made to Germany by the Liberals regarding colonial policy. The Conservatives could then have repeated their old catchword, as they had so often done in the past, that an era of Liberalism at home had coincided with a weakening of the Empire position in colonial and world affairs. Without admitting Germany's need for economic development, and under veiled threats of a larger English naval program, Grey suggested that a concession should be extorted from Germany with regard to her naval program; an election would then be held, and afterwards, with the Liberals again in power, negotiations would be opened with Germany in regard to individual colonial questions. Germany was thus to give evidence of her friendly feelings and take her chance of whether Grey, *after* a naval agreement and *always dependent on the changing currents in his own Cabinet,* would be in a position to determine England's foreign policy for several years to come, and whether he would in the future continue to give proof of his readiness to come to terms. By the curtailment of her naval program Germany was to furnish Grey with the necessary personal and political credit for the right wing of his Party and the Conservatives, and afterwards, when the struggle with the House of Lords was over, he would perhaps try to obtain economic and colonial political concessions for Germany.

A psychological exposition of the whole affair shows at once why Grey's attempts at an agreement were foredoomed to failure. His policy, which was self-centred because of

the weakness of his Cabinet and the internal dissension of his Party in all foreign problems, suffered furthermore, in contradistinction to the wide political conceptions of his King, from the fundamental flaw that he entirely overlooked the mentality of the other party in the negotiations.

The German Navy was the favourite toy of a monarch suffering from megalomania, but it was also Admiral von Tirpitz's well designed instrument for making Germany secure from the worst consequences of her monarch's weakness in character. If the lines of thought on which, according to his *Reminiscences*, Tirpitz founded his naval building policy, are stripped of all Party controversy and Party feeling in his conflict with the Kaiser—which only arose after the outbreak of war—the motives of the German naval building program are set forth most clearly in the following extract: "We hesitated for a long time when drafting the second Naval Bill in 1900 as to whether the idea of hostility to England should be included. I should have preferred to leave England out of the question altogether, but such an extraordinary proposal as ours, namely, the doubling of our small sea power, made it scarcely possible to avoid giving at least some indication of the real reason. It was in any case impossible to induce our own public, conscious of its own peaceable harmlessness, to keep silent in regard to England when it felt entitled to express its moral indignation at the conquerors of the Boers. We strove in vain to calm down the clamour against England, and ultimately it seemed expedient that the Navy League should itself seek to moderate the public tone. I therefore resolved in explaining the object of the Naval Bill to demonstrate quite clearly that the purpose of the navy was an honest political defensive, and in the Reichstag in December 1899 I pointed out that the size and construction of the German Fleet must be based on a consideration of the most serious situation which might arise in

time of war—conflict with our greatest possible opponent at sea. For this emergency the disposition of the fleet must be such that her most effective service in a defensive war would be in a battle in the North Sea. The proposed German Fleet offered the English, politically speaking, every security for peace, for as the British Fleet was twice or three times as strong as ours, it would have been madness on our part to pick a quarrel with such a slight prospect of success. But what we did strive for was to become so strong that even for the greatly superior British Fleet there would be a certain risk in a contest with us. Herein lay our political defensive, just as in a defensive war the readiness to fight is of tactical value. The idea that our fleet should be kept at a strength not greater, but at the same time not less, than was necessary, gained a certain popularity as it gave the appearance that it would be a risky procedure for even the greatest sea power to attack us.

"In the year 1900 it was generally recognized that Germany was on the point of taking the inevitable step towards a world policy, and let her trade, at least to some extent, follow her flag. The less talk there was about it, the fewer perspectives were opened, the better it was . . . I expressed my conviction to the Emperor under the following heads: 'When the object is achieved, your Majesty will have an effective force of thirty-eight ships of the line with full complements. England alone will have a greater force than this, but even as against her we are undoubtedly in a good position, owing to our geographical situation, our military system, transport facilities, torpedo boats, technical training, efficient organizations, and unity of command.

" 'Apart from the fact that in case of war we are not without some hope of success, England should, for general political reasons and also from the sober standpoint of the business man, lose all inclination to attack us, and she must

concede to us such a measure of sea power that our colonial interests will not suffer. Of the four World Powers, Russia, England, America and Germany, two can be reached by sea only, wherefore sea power becomes more and more important.

" 'Salisbury's saying, that big states would become bigger and stronger, small ones smaller and weaker, expresses the modern development towards the concentration of power, towards the trust system. As Germany is far behind with regard to sea power, it is a matter of vital importance for us to make up for lost time. Obviously, in Germany's development as a world-industrial and commercial state lies the best means of ensuring that the surplus population remains German. This development is as irresistible as a law of nature. If it were to be dammed up, it would burst through the dam. Points of contact and disagreement with other nations grow out of an industrial and commercial development of this kind. Sea power is therefore indispensable to Germany lest she rapidly go under. . . .'

"In January 1900, I outlined my idea to the Kaiser that our naval program would never be sufficiently large to constitute a threat to England. The Battle Fleet was never meant for a trans-oceanic war, but for the defence of home waters alone."

The acute naval panic in March 1908, aroused in England by the Tweedmouth correspondence, which Rosebery characterized with general approval as a direct danger to European peace, had greatly increased the uneasiness felt in the city at Grey's unsuccessful attempts to tie Germany down to a numerical ratio relative to the British in her naval building. Leading city men got in touch with friendly German economists in an attempt to find ways and means of abolishing the naval rivalry, or to come to some arrangement. It was then pointed out from the German side that it would not

be easy to effect an agreement on naval building, as the development of the German Navy had been decided upon by the Naval Laws of 1900 and 1906. The ships would automatically be laid down at fixed periods, and a change or postponement of those periods to later fiscal years could only be arranged by means of an amendment to the Naval Laws. The German economists, drawn principally from Hamburg, Cologne, and Frankfurt, who stood in close social relations with England, ridiculed the idea of the German Fleet being a "luxury fleet," and pointed out to their friends that it would scarcely be possible for a German Government to lay before the Reichstag, as a result of Anglo-German negotiations, a demand for ratification of a settlement that would slow down the German naval program exclusively for the relief of the British Budget and the solution of petty Liberal quarrels.

As a result of this approach, England first began to consider a discussion of the naval question, no longer by uncomprehending diplomats but by economists. The reason for this procedure was the reflection that the navies of the two great industrial and commercial powers were, after all, not meant to be costly "ends in themselves," but were primarily intended to guard their colonial possessions and the merchant fleet, and to secure the two peoples' supply of raw material and foodstuffs. England and Germany had then at their disposal two economic diplomats of the first order: the English Underground Railway King, Sir Ernest Cassel, and the director of the Hamburg-America Line, Albert Ballin. Both men, business politicians of great standing, who in virtue of their positions were accustomed to think in terms of world policy and world economics, had the confidence not only of the influential commercial circles of their respective countries but, what was particularly important in this case, the personal confidence of their rulers. The city having been

sounded and having given proof of the German economists' willingness to discuss the naval question with English friends, Sir Ernest Cassel was empowered by the King to hold a consultation with Ballin, and in this "undiplomatic" manner pave the way for an Anglo-German agreement with a wider range than the Grey-Metternich conversations about the building ratio.

This new connection offered a possibility of abandoning the untenable position in which the two countries stood to each other, in which Germany only gave and England received, and of combining with a discussion of the naval programs of both countries other questions in which Germany might have a better chance of at last receiving something. Two such proved business men and negotiators had no intention of seating themselves at the debating table to discuss a chimera. Each had too great a respect for the other's capabilities to propose to him material or psychological impossibilities.

# THE ECONOMIST-DIPLOMATS

At the first conference between Ballin and Cassel in June 1908, Cassel immediately showed by the manner of his conversation that he was speaking as a private person and as the King's friend and counsellor, and not as a partisan of the Liberal Government. He defined the object of the discussion as the elimination of the dangerous spirit of rivalry between the two countries, thus indicating a greater aim than a mere naval discussion. According to Ballin's reports on these negotiations he admitted straight away that the naval competition was only *one* outstanding feature of a series of symptoms of this feverish race in world policy and world commerce.

King Edward, so Cassel explained to Ballin, was most deeply perturbed by the fact that British supremacy at sea was being threatened by the rate of German naval construction. The King was, of course, well aware that his nephew would not be inclined to provoke war, and that by nature he was opposed to the horrors of a war. It was therefore unlikely that there would be war between Germany and England during the few years of life still remaining to the King; but he considered that it was his duty to see to it that British supremacy at sea, his inheritance from his mother, would be equally secure when he handed it down to his son, so that no possible successor to the Kaiser would be tempted to challenge it.

Cassel's last remark alluded to the fact that the Crown Prince and Bülow were looked upon as the representatives of the idea that a preventive war should be waged by Germany against the Entente, before the strengthening of Russia and the passing of the French Military Reform Measures.

Ballin sought to lull the King's apprehensions by affirming that the British Navy, in virtue of its superior strength, had no reason to fear a German offensive war. To this Cassel rejoined that the view was being expressed in well-informed British circles, that Germany was building more and greater vessels than the Government's declarations in the Reichstag appeared to indicate. The British Navy would always remain stronger than the German, and would never be inferior in quality of naval equipment and armament. Nevertheless, conscription and the proficiency of the German naval officers were factors which offered certain compensation to the German Navy for a smaller number of vessels. To Ballin's objection that a naval battle would after all primarily be decided by the number of vessels and guns, Cassel explained that the South African War had been a lesson to England as to how long a weaker but more efficient enemy could hold out.

Cassel then made a disclosure which illustrated to what an extent the politicians, by their weakness and the differences of opinion in their ranks, had already lost ground in their policy of alliance, as against the military experts. Cassel declared that the anxiety aroused by the German danger was now the driving force of the Entente policy, and that the Entente policy was a means of allaying the fears entertained in England with regard to Germany's political intentions. In Reval, so Cassel asserted, the Russians had been advised, probably by Sir John Fisher, to give up their projected naval construction and to concentrate all their financial efforts in reorganizing the army.[1]

[1] This interesting proof of the influence which the military had on the relations of the Entente countries, for which there was no foundation in the Treaties between England, France and Russia, is a counterpart of the conference between English and Belgian staff officers, which took place in the year 1906. As the author has been informed by English military experts, permission was given to English staff officers to discuss Belgium's problems of defence with Belgian colleagues, only *after* the visit of

In the further course of this conference, Cassel once more gave evidence of how the mentality of the military experts was already beginning to exercise a determining influence on the political deliberations of the authorities. He expressed the opinion that some day England might perhaps feel compelled, in agreement with the other two Entente Powers, to direct a formal enquiry to Germany as to when and at what point she proposed to put a stop to naval building. Ballin passionately replied that such an attempt to force Germany into a Fashoda-like position in questions of armament would mean immediate war. Cassel could render no better service to an agreement policy than by pointing out to his fellow-countrymen the danger of such a proceeding.

After both political economists had again expressed their opinion on the close international relations of "big business," which would cause war to be a very serious affair, they came to the conclusion that the excitement in England over the Tweedmouth episode must be further calmed down, and that King Edward must be induced to pay his first visit—which was always being postponed—as English sovereign to Berlin, in order to soothe German sensibilities, before progress could be made in the rapprochement between the two countries.

Cassel and Ballin then took preparatory steps for King Edward's short visit to the Kaiser at Cronberg, which took place on 11th August 1908, with the object of making arrangements for a state visit of the royal pair to Berlin, and for a change of British Ambassador at the Imperial Court.

The fact that the negotiations between Ballin and Cassel had reached this point accounts for the King's reluctance at Cronberg to bring Grey's unimpressive Memorandum to the notice of the Kaiser, thereby embarrassing Cassel's policy

the Danish Count Friis to King Edward in the autumn of 1905 (compare page 261) when the Danish statesman spoke of Germany's intention eventually to invade Denmark.

of cautious soundings. On the other hand, William II's ill-humour over Hardinge's broaching of the naval question is easily understood, since he must have got the impression from the conversations he had with Ballin shortly before at Kiel, that the next official move England was contemplating in relation to Germany would be the long deferred inaugural visit of the royal pair to Berlin. How narrowly a clash between uncle and nephew was avoided at Cronberg becomes apparent only when these events are considered together.

Ballin and Cassel's peace effort was more than once greatly endangered during the following months. The atmosphere in England was spoiled by the publication of the Kaiser's interview in the *Daily Telegraph*. In this interview he posed as England's protector during the Boer War, Germany having prevented Franco-Russian intervention. The English were characterized as "mad March hares," because of their apprehension of the German Navy. In Germany the interview was regarded as an undignified "running after" England. Agitated discussions followed in the Reichstag, and the Kaiser tried to mitigate the damage he had suffered in German public opinion by swinging round to the other extreme. He gave an American journalist an anti-British interview, in which he again charged his uncle with a number of unfriendly acts. This interview was suppressed, only a few "misquotations" appearing in the *New York Herald*. In order to save the pending English state visit, Bülow induced the Kaiser to deny the interview *in toto* and Grey, who was seeking a fresh opportunity for an attempt to bring about the naval agreement, urged the King to fix the date for his Berlin visit.

At this request, King Edward took up the following attitude in a letter to his private secretary, Lord Knollys, written in his own hand and equally characteristic of his relations with the Kaiser and with his Foreign Minister:

"My dear Francis,—Thank you for sending me Metternich's letter with G.E.'s emphatic denial. I presume nothing more to say than to accept. I am, however, convinced in my mind, that the words attributed to the German Emperor by Mr. Hale are perfectly correct. I know the German Emperor hates me and never loses an opportunity of saying so (behind my back), whilst I have always been kind and nice to him. As regards my visit to Berlin there is no hurry to settle anything at present. The Foreign Office to gain their own object will not care a pin what humiliation I have to put up with."

The three days' visit of the King and Queen to Berlin passed without incident, chiefly because Grey was induced to remain in London in view of the negotiations over Bosnia, and only the Colonial Minister, Lord Crewe, and the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Charles Hardinge, were in the King's suite. There was little mention of politics. The King took the greatest pains, not without success, to make himself popular in Berlin. The strain of the visit caused King Edward to faint on several occasions. When he returned to England there arose, after a naval debate in the House of Commons, a fresh naval panic because the Government and Admiralty believed they had been imperfectly informed as to the German program of construction by their own naval experts in Germany and by German diplomats.

In spite of the panic in England, the atmosphere in Germany, owing to the King's visit which had disarmed many opponents, had become more favourable for a renewal of negotiations between Cassel and Ballin. In July 1909 Ballin visited Cassel in London, and later sent the following report to the Kaiser, which I quote from Huldermann's Biography of Ballin:

"In a private letter sent about a week before, I had already

announced to my friend (Cassel) my approaching visit, and had intimated that I wished on this occasion, for my personal information, to continue the discussions on the naval question which we had carried on a year ago. He seemed in the meantime to have acquainted himself thoroughly and authoritatively with this matter. In the course of a long conversation he spoke with perfect surety, and each word seemed to have been weighed beforehand.

"I told my friend at the start that he must not be surprised if, in view of the great agitation which prevailed in England over the German construction of battleships and which served as a basis for a hostile feeling against Germany, I wished to resume the interesting discussions which I had had with him on the same subject a year before. I pointed out that this excitement, which was stirred up among the people by an unscrupulous Press and stupid politicians, might have quite a different result from that at which they were perhaps aiming at that moment. I emphasized that I myself was speaking only as a private person, who read the English newspapers and the letters of his English friends with interest, and therefore that my knowledge was based only on private sources.

"I stressed the point that, a year ago, my friend had shown me in his clear and skilful manner the necessity for an agreement between Germany and England over the projected building of battleships, and had asked for my co-operation to gain this object. This suggestion had in my case fallen on fruitful soil. The fact that I had succeeded in reconciling the interests of the German, English, French, Italian, Austrian, and a whole series of smaller nations, with regard to the most important questions of trans-oceanic commercial shipping, and had established relations which were peaceful and profitable for all parties in place of endless and profitless competition, made me think that with goodwill such a way

should be practicable also between Governments. I had therefore decided to submit such a plan to the German Government. But before doing so I must, of course, ascertain whether England still shared the point of view which my friend had represented a year before.

"To this Cassel replied that the circumstances in England had changed considerably during the year, and that he was no longer in the position to represent the views which he had voiced at that time. It was more clearly recognized today than on the former occasion that England must maintain her supremacy at sea under all circumstances and with complete freedom. In view of the naval construction which Austria and France had determined on in the meantime a one-sided agreement between Germany and England was no longer possible. Austria was a fairly reliable factor in Germany's account, but France was no dependable asset for England. In addition there were the altogether doubtful factors, Russia and Italy. England would sink to the status of a Power of the fifth rank if, in view of this expansion, she allowed herself to be tied down to a program by Germany. Germany had its greatly superior army, with which it could keep Austria, Italy, Russia and France in check. England had only its Navy to support its powerful position in the world and to enable it to keep its Colonies. England had had opportunity to gather together great possessions throughout many decades. But those days were over. During the reign of Kaiser William II, who had introduced Germany to international trade with a definiteness of aim which could not be sufficiently praised, and which had developed German industry and German shipping to unheard of prosperity, England had suffered many losses in overseas trade. English commerce was declining, and it was doubtful whether England would be in a position to continue her Free Trade system for any length of time.

"The most difficult question appeared to my friend to

be the problem of the Austrian building of battleships. This circumstance, in connection with the uncertain attitude of Russia and the incalculable state of affairs in France, seemed to cause the King special anxiety. My friend finally told me that he considered it a most auspicious moment for Germany for an agreement, but a very unfortunate one for England. There could be no negotiations for agreement whilst people were afraid. In England today this fear manifested itself in a very disagreeable form, and this must create the impression in Germany that England was ready to come to an agreement even on unfavourable terms. England had lagged behind not only in regard to her trade, but also in regard to her naval building. For various reasons there was little prospect of England being able to beat her competitors in world trade in the future. On the other hand, the alteration of the unfavourable ratio of British battleship construction was only a question of money. The means must and would be forthcoming to bring the British Navy again to such a strength as was necessary in respect of her world position.

"I replied to my friend that I was amazed at the complete change of his view in this matter. Not what he had said, but what he had omitted to say, made me suppose that in English Government circles, for which perhaps the German Government was partly to blame, the idea had taken root that the Imperial Government would desist from further expansion of the German Navy when the decisions of the present Naval Law had been carried out, and would confine itself merely to the slow replacing of obsolete old vessels. Such a view could only have a certain justification if a similar system were adopted in England. But if on the other hand England considered, as I gathered from his words that it did, that the moment had come to change the relative strength between the two countries by extensive construc-

tion, it would soon be found that they had reckoned without their host. Considering the tendencies prevailing here, at any rate according to my entirely personal and quite unofficial view, Germany must also have the intention of increasing the size of her navy beyond the limits of the Naval Law, to such an extent that it would be able to wage a defensive war with certainty of success. Unrestricted construction of battle ships on England's part meant therefore an ever-increasing number of vessels for both nations."

On the evening of this day, Cassel invited Ballin to dine at his house with a few prominent friends. When Ballin appeared, he found Cassel, who had meanwhile been in communication with the King, alone. In his report on this eventful evening, Ballin continues as follows: "My friend told me that, so as to be alone with me, he had cancelled his invitation to the other gentlemen on the pretext that he was still feeling too unwell. It was obvious that he had meanwhile reported on the result of our discussion, and that the atmosphere had changed. There seemed to me to be no doubt that this change was brought about by my remarks regarding the necessity—if compelled thereto by British activity—for a further increase of the Germany Navy. In the course of the long conference which followed, this impression turned out to be absolutely correct.

"Cassel realized that the Liberal Cabinet had acted in a 'penny wise and pound foolish' manner with regard to the naval question. That is the feeling of the great majority of English people today, and that has aroused the present apprehension and hostility in England. In Cassel's opinion the Liberal Government had done great damage and brought about its own ruin. He believed that it would not be long before another Party would be in power. *If the Liberal Cabinet had not neglected the Navy for the benefit of its own*

*fantastic ideas and social reform, there would today have been no question of a hostile feeling toward Germany.*[1] Other difficult political problems aggravated the situation. France had always been an incalculable factor because of the unstable French national character. On account of the internal political situation, it was at that moment more unreliable than ever. As against this Germany, thanks to its military superiority, could with certainty dispose of Austria. Russia he would not even mention. He had never considered the English overtures to Russia a wise step.

"Granted the necessity—and he believed from what I had said he could take it for granted—that England in consideration of her colonial and world trade interests must maintain a definite supremacy of the seas, then he believed that reasonable men would finally discover a formula to which both countries could subscribe. One great difficulty in the way was the demand, again and again emphasized by me, that England must continue her Free Trade system. England could perhaps speak for herself on this point, but not for her great Colonies. History proves that England lost possession of the United States of North America when she sought to impose on them certain ties with regard to mercantile policy. That Germany, in spite of the bad state of affairs which were revealed by the reform of the Imperial finances, was rich enough further to increase its fleet beyond the porportion which hitherto had existed between it and the British Fleet, seemed to him to be beyond question. The great mistake of the Liberal Cabinet and of other of the King's advisers had indeed been that they believed the German Naval Law, for financial reasons, would not be completely executed. Wealth in Germany had, in his opinion, increased to a much greater degree than even the German Government and German

[1] Italicized by the Author.

financiers were aware. Everywhere German wealth was in evidence. People turned round amazed in the street if, during the season in Egypt or in Italy, the tourists nowadays were heard to speak any other language but German. For him at all events there existed no doubt as to whether Germany was in a position today to keep pace with the British in the construction of battleships, even if the pace was a very brisk one.

"He regarded the possibility that England would abandon her Free Trade system within an appreciable period as entirely out of the question for domestic political reasons, and since an agreement could not be arranged for ever but only for a limited number of years, there was in his opinion no necessity for Germany—in view of the independence of the colonies—to stipulate as a condition such an impossible demand. On the other hand *a spirit of friendly accommodation might be shown on England's part with regard to many other questions pending between the two Governments.*[1] He was therefore inclined to revise the opinion he had expressed in the morning into a suggestion that if some sensible men were appointed by both sides to meet for a discussion of the question at issue, it would undoubtedly be useful. This conference must be absolutely secret, and both sides must agree that, in the case of such an agreement being reached, there must be no victors and no vanquished. This was a condition *sine qua non.*"

The Kaiser sent a copy of the letter to Tirpitz, who expressed himself in favour of agreeing to the English suggestion for negotiations, but—and this was absolutely correct according to German constitutional practice—he proposed a consultation with the newly appointed German Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg. After a discussion between Ballin and Bethmann-Hollweg there was a brisk exchange of telegrams

[1] Italicized by the Author.

between Ballin and Cassel, culminating in Cassel's invitation to Ballin to come to London and make the necessary arrangements for a conference of experts. At this point Ballin and Bethmann-Hollweg both committed a serious blunder. The procedure regarding the conference had so far been successful because the diplomats and the personally antipathetic monarchs, who were only informed through their confidants, had been rigidly excluded. But Ballin now enquired from the Chancellor whether he, Ballin, should go to London, or whether the Chancellor himself wished to take part in the negotiations. Bethmann-Hollweg's telegraphic reply is a typical example of the subjective uncertainty of this Chancellor:

> "Many thanks for your kind telegram, which I immediately gave close consideration. I shall forward you a further reply as soon as the necessary discussions with the persons concerned are concluded, which will take some days."

The Chancellor's next communication to Ballin shows plainly that he had spoiled the King's game and had played right into the hands of Grey. He writes:

> "I have today taken the official steps you had in view. Since I stipulated with Sir Edward Goschen that there should be absolute secrecy, and a communication by your friend to the English Government to the effect that I had made an official move in the matter might be regarded as an indiscretion, I must ask you, if you must send him a communication at all, to reply to your friend in such a way that this danger will be avoided."

Thus the negotiations between Cassel and Ballin were once more threatened with frustration through diplomatic con-

ferences. The German proposals for a conference of experts, brought to the notice of the British Government through the usual diplomatic channels, provoked the marginal note from the King that: "It is all very interesting, no doubt, but I have reason to believe that nothing will come of the German propositions." In spite of the King's scepticism and understandable suspicion of the negotiations over the naval question, which were now once more being handled "diplomatically," he again addressed an appeal to William II in a letter of congratulation on the Kaiser's birthday in January 1910, reminding him "that it is essential for the peace of the world that we should walk shoulder by shoulder for the good of civilization and the prosperity of the world." The Kaiser replied to the serious exhortation of his uncle, who was already very ill, by one of his cheap clichés, in which he declared that the aim denoted by Edward VII was the guiding principle of his policy. He then continued that it was part of his political creed that the future of the world would be ensured if the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic races would cooperate. They were the powerful guardians of the ideals of the Christian civilization, and it was their common duty to proclaim and spread these ideals over the whole world. This mission was imposed on them by Providence. The extent and greatness of this mission should be sufficient to render all petty quarrels between the two peoples impossible. This aim should remind them that Providence was waiting for the nations, who were about to neglect their mission, to return to it. If only the nations were made conscious of this, then they would soon forget their differences and be ready to come together.

As was to be expected, the Ballin-Cassel negotiations came to grief when they were side-tracked into diplomatic channels. A few weeks after the death of the King, Asquith stated in the House of Commons that the German Government had declared that it could make no change in the German

naval program, since it had been established by law, and that public opinion in Germany would not support a Government proposing alterations in the Naval Law. The English Government had approached the German Government, but the latter was not in a position to do anything in this matter.

Ballin and Cassel did not yet look on the game as lost, but made further efforts to bring about Anglo-German negotiations on the widest possible basis. Haldane's negotiations in Berlin in the year 1912—when an extension of the German colonial possessions in Africa, a formula for Anglo-German neutrality, and the strength of the navies were discussed on the basis outlined in the continued discussions of the two business magnates—unfortunately only took place after the death of King Edward.

CHAPTER V

# THE ANGLO-SAXON COMMUNITY

IN the first decade of the twentieth century there was only one of the world Powers free from all political ties, and that the youngest, the United States. This was in keeping with the historical tradition of the Union, which had renounced every alliance with European and Asiatic Powers after the consolidation of American independence. It was also in accordance with the desire of American politicians to carry the Monroe Doctrine through against every European attempt at interference in American affairs, with the argument that America would likewise leave the Europeans and Asiatics to manage their own concerns without American interference. Perhaps European efforts to persuade the United States to abandon this attitude of reserve, so as to involve her in international groupings, would have been pushed forward more vigorously before the beginning of the present century had there not been a prevalent impression in Europe, that the American forces and means available for overseas enterprises had been directed towards the Far East because of the idea of an acute "Yellow Peril," which had arisen since McKinley's presidency.

Characteristic of this train of thought are statements in von Tirpitz's Memoirs. He repeatedly reveals his opinion that the German naval construction was systematically carried out so that Germany might choose between America and Japan. Germany would then be a desirable ally for either of the two antagonists in the next overseas war. For this reason Tirpitz condemned the Kaiser's overtures to America, Prince Henry's visit, the monuments which Germany so lavishly presented to America, and the flatteries and excessive demonstra-

tions of friendship with which the German monarch at Kiel and elsewhere overwhelmed Americans travelling in Europe. The German overtures were of no avail. The Kaiser's dream after Björkö, that America would combine with a German-Russian constellation, could never be fulfilled. For experiments of this nature there had never been a majority in the American Congress, which decided questions of war and peace.

William II's encouragement of friendly relations between Germany and America attracted the attention of the Entente politicians to this great transatlantic Power, which was free from political ties. The French, supported by clever propaganda, resumed the relationship of the days of the American War of Independence. King Edward, who as Prince of Wales had already intervened once to prevent an Anglo-American War, had cultivated incessant friendly relations with influential Americans both before and after 1895.

Almost simultaneously with King Edward's accession to the throne, Vice-President Roosevelt, on the assassination of McKinley, succeeded to the American Presidency, and, as was to be expected from his energetic disposition, he also undertook to play the deciding role in America's foreign policy. In his youth Roosevelt had been decidedly hostile to England because, as an American Imperialist, he feared that England would put obstacles in the way of American economic progress, and of her expansion overseas in the direction of Cuba, Panama, and Eastern Asia. In the first years of his presidency, the European Cabinet Ministers were not clear as to how Roosevelt, in the event of war, would interpret the conception of benevolent neutrality. While Germany alone cherished the hope of including Roosevelt in an active political combination of European Powers, the Cabinets of the Entente clearly realized that America, being Europe's most important purveyor of weapons and raw products, would

probably exercise a deciding influence, even without military action, by the way in which she interpreted the definitions of neutrality and blockade.

Durand, the British Ambassador at Washington, suggested to King Edward that he might take advantage of Roosevelt's election to the Presidency in the year 1904, to send a letter of congratulation to the American Chief of State, as Germany and France had already done. The King was willing, but the Foreign Office opposed any such intention with the argument that it was an interference in the domestic affairs of the United States, and they reprimanded the Ambassador for having made the suggestion. But Durand did not yield; he gave the King a precedent for a correspondence between an English Monarch and an American President.

The King thereupon drafted the following letter to Roosevelt:

"Dear Mr. Roosevelt,—Lord Lansdowne tells me that it is not in accordance with precedent that I should send you formal official congratulations on your second inauguration. At the same time I cannot refrain from sending a personal Godspeed to the elected chief of the republican branch of the English-speaking people.

"You know what my parents personally did to prevent the horrible calamity of a war between our peoples. It is my dearest wish to do all in my power to promote a cordial understanding between them, based not on treaties and conventions but on mutual sympathy and co-operation in the realization of those principles which are our common inheritance. You have shown both in words and deed what is your conception of those principles.

"I know that it is impossible that I should welcome you on this side of the Atlantic during the term of your office. Were it possible, you should see what a reception would

be given to the President of the United States by the King of Great Britain and Ireland and by his people. I hope some day to make your personal acquaintance and that of Mrs. Roosevelt. I hope you will convey my good wishes to your sister.

"I am sending you the miniature of a great Englishman,[1] who was once a landowner in your country. I hope you will keep it as a souvenir of your sincere well-wisher.

"I am sending you the Queen's Journal of her life in the Highlands, and I hope you will send me in exchange a copy of one of your works in order that it may be preserved in my library at Windsor."

The original draft was a masterpiece. Every word was calculated with almost artistic perfection to appeal to Roosevelt's wilful and ambitious personality. But the King was not permitted to send the letter in this form. The Foreign Office edited it, and turned the perfect work of a great artist into a soulless official document, which could be of value to Roosevelt, only because of the King's signature and the present which accompanied it.

"Dear Mr. President,—Although I have never had the pleasure of knowing you personally, I am anxious to avail myself of the opportunity which your inauguration as President affords, in order to offer you an assurance of my sincere goodwill and my warm personal congratulations on this notable occasion.

"You, Mr. President, and I, have been called upon to superintend the destinies of the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, and this fact should in my opinion alone suffice to bring us together.

[1] The "great Englishman" was John Hampden.

"It has indeed often seemed strange to me that, being as I am on intimate terms with the rulers of Europe, I should not be in closer touch with the President of the United States. It would be agreeable to me, and, I think, advantageous to both countries, that this state of things should in future cease to exist.

"As a slight indication of the feelings which I have endeavoured to express, it gives me great pleasure to ask your acceptance of the miniature of a great Englishman —Hampden—who was once a landowner in your own country. I do so in memory of the old country, and as a mark of my esteem and regard for yourself.

"The Cruiser Squadron of the Atlantic Fleet, commanded by my nephew, Prince Louis of Battenberg, will visit my North American Colonies this summer, and I shall have much gratification in sending it in the autumn to some of the most important ports in your country. I have but little doubt that the British Squadron will receive the same cordial welcome which your country always shows towards mine.

"I sincerely hope that Mrs. Roosevelt and the members of your family are in the best of health, and begging you to bring me to the remembrance of your sister, Mrs. Cowles, whom I have the pleasure of knowing, believe me, dear Mr. President, very truly yours,

Edward R."

Six days after the receipt of the letter and of the miniature Roosevelt thanked the King in a letter in which the following passage occurs:

"I absolutely agree with you as to the importance, not merely to ourselves, but to all the free peoples of the civilized world, of a constantly growing friendship and

understanding between the English-speaking peoples. One of the gratifying things in what has occurred during the last decade has been the growth in this feeling of goodwill. All I can do to foster it will be done. I need hardly add, that in order to foster it, we need judgment and moderation no less than the goodwill itself. The larger interests of the two nations are the same, and the fundamental underlying traits of their characters are also the same. Over here, our gravest problems are those affecting us within. In matters outside our own borders, we are chiefly concerned, first with what goes on south of us, second with affairs in the Orient; and in both cases our interests are identical with yours."

After Roosevelt had successfully mediated in the Russo-Japanese war, King Edward sent his friend Wallace to America with the message that the King hoped that the friendship of the two Anglo-Saxon nations would always continue, not only because of their common origin, but also in consideration of their innumerable common interests. Roosevelt declared to Wallace that he cordially reciprocated the King's sentiments. No gift which had been made to him had given him so much pleasure as the miniature portrait of Hampden. So as to remain in constant touch with the American President, the King sent his cousin, Count Gleichen, as Military Attaché to Washington. When the arrangements were made for the Hague Peace Conference, Roosevelt sent for Gleichen and told him that America would put forward a proposal at the Hague Conference for the limitation of the size of battleships. In future it would be much more useful to encourage the nations not to build Dreadnoughts than to limit the size of the army. Roosevelt then continued: "You may tell them that I intend to back up England to the utmost in the Hague Conference—I daresay Germany won't expect

THE "FREEDOM" OF THE CITY

Mr. Roosevelt. "Mornin', Brer Terrapin!"

City Turtle. "Mornin', Colonel! Guess you ain't goin' to lie low an' say nuffin'?"

Mr. Roosevelt. "Well, what do *you* think?"

From *Punch*, June 1, 1910

it, and I know she won't like it—but I'm going to do so all the same." [1]

Notwithstanding his Ministers, who wanted to put a separate English disarmament program before the Hague Conference, the King achieved his object in demanding that England should give her whole diplomatic support to the American proposals.

In the last phase of the exchange of views between Edward VII and Roosevelt, the note was struck which anticipated the companionship-in-arms of the World War. Roosevelt wrote:

> "I feel very strongly that the real interests of the English-speaking people are one, alike in the Atlantic and the Pacific; and that, while scrupulously careful neither to insult nor to injure others, we should yet make it evident that we are ready and able to hold our own."

More reserved, but none the less decisive, Edward replied:

> "I entirely agree with you that the interests of the English-speaking peoples are alike in the Atlantic and the Pacific, and I look forward with confidence to the co-operation of the English-speaking races becoming the most powerful civilizing factor in the policy of the world."

As a symbol and pledge of this "co-operation," Roosevelt, the converted Anglophobe, represented his country at the burial of the English diplomat-King, and thereby secured for

[1] This remark of Roosevelt's proves the correctness of Tirpitz's idea, according to which "any consideration of German interests must be entirely ruled out if both of the Anglo-Saxon world Powers have anything to do with them . . . At the turn of the century England had for the last time considered whether to turn against America, and had negatived the idea . . . The natural sympathy of the Americans was for the English . . . When in 1914 we drifted into war, one of the most serious consequences of this terrible fact was that we, instead of blunting the Anglo-Saxon community of interest, helped to develop it completely."

the dead King the last and, for the future of his country, probably the most important triumph of all. Roosevelt, not William II, was the popular hero at the funeral ceremonies at London and Windsor.

CHAPTER VI

# THE DEATH STRUGGLE

## I

### GATHERING CLOUDS

KING EDWARD was much agitated during the last few weeks of his life by the unusually large number of political conflicts which then occurred. His stiff fight with Morley, the Secretary for India, to attempt to get Kitchener appointed as Viceroy, was in vain, and he was greatly perturbed by Lloyd George's blood-curdling agitation against the House of Lords, which had twice thrown out his Budget. The quarrel about the constitution, in which the King made great efforts as mediator between the Liberals, who were in a majority in the House of Commons, and the Conservatives, with their majority in the House of the Lords, gave rise to the most unfounded, malicious rumours—which were to some extent supported by the Ministers themselves—that the King had sided with the Conservatives of the House of Lords against the leading Party in the House of Commons. The King was driven to request the impulsive Churchill to refrain from making speeches in which he brought the name of the King and the attitude of the Crown into discussion, and thereby forestalled the decision with regard to the King's prerogative to create peers.

The rash way in which the Liberal agitators—including Ministers of the Crown—gave the public to understand that the King's function was merely that of a tool to be used by the Parliamentary majority and the Cabinet, induced Court officials and Conservatives to point out to the King in numerous memoranda that he was not in duty bound to accept

the advice of his Ministers, but that, on the contrary, he could make them resign by refusing to follow it.

There was not the slightest justification for the recriminations of either Party. Twenty years earlier the King, as heir-apparent, had already proved his sensitiveness to the swing of the political pendulum when he secured Gladstone's nomination as Prime Minister. Moreover, but a few weeks before the conflict between the House of Commons and the House of Lords came to a head, he had expressed at length to the Liberal Minister, Lord Cromer, at a dinner at Windsor in the spring of 1910, how extremely unjust it seemed to him that the Conservatives, when in a majority in the House of Commons, could pass through any reactionary legislation without being in any way impeded by the House of Lords, whereas the Liberals, when they obtained even an overwhelming majority in the Commons, had no assurance that their legislation would be accepted by the Lords. The King suggested that in future not every hereditary member of the House of Lords should be entitled to vote, but that the two Party leaders in the Lords should nominate for the duration of each session fifty of the most prominent men of their respective Parties with the exclusive right to vote. There would surely be found among these a number of eminent men who would not consent to submit to Party discipline against their better judgment, and there would thus be a prospect of obtaining a majority in the Lords for a reasonable compromise with the Commons in the case of a controversial measure.

## 2

### DEATH THE LIBERATOR

Since January 1910 the King's health had been in an extremely unsatisfactory state. He had suffered from frequently

recurring colds, bronchitis, and attacks of shortness of breath. His stay in the south, which had been cut short by the crisis at home, had this time failed to give him any relief. A cold April brought about the last obstinate chill, which developed early in May into a severe attack of bronchitis complicated by heart failure, which ultimately proved fatal.

On 4th May the King received in audience a high official, and during the course of their conversation he was seized with a violent attack of laboured breathing. His visitor entreated him to spare himself and to retire to bed, but the King replied: "No, I shall not give in—I shall work to the end. Of what use is it to be alive if one cannot work?"

On the following day the King's respiration was somewhat easier, and he declared to his physician that he would be able to overcome this attack as he had the previous ones, and be back at his post in a few days. On 6th May the King's condition took a turn for the worse. For the first time the inveterate smoker had no desire for a cigar. Although critically ill, in order to receive his old friend, Sir Ernest Cassel, who had shared all his personal and political troubles, he allowed his attendants to dress him. In the afternoon his condition became hopeless. In the evening, while being undressed, he murmured, already in a state of semi-consciousness: "No, I shall not give in; I shall go on; I shall work to the end."

Numerous editions of the evening papers had alarmed the ever loyal London crowd. In their thousands they thronged to Buckingham Palace—to hear, just before Big Ben tolled the midnight hour, the words of a Court official: "The King is Dead." Till the dawn came they held watch over his deathbed.

# APPENDIX A

# BRITISH DOCUMENTS ON THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR [1]

## THE MARQUESS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA TO THE EARL OF ROSEBERY

F. O. France 3121.
(No. 450.) Confidential.

Paris, *November* 3, 1893.

MY LORD,—Your Lordship has been kept so fully informed of the proceedings connected with the Franco-Russian fêtes at Paris and at Toulon by the newspaper extracts forwarded from this Embassy that it is unnecessary for me to trouble you with a particular description of them. There still remain, however, some interesting questions connected with their character and consequences which it may be worth while to examine.

There can be no doubt that the exultation caused by the advent of the Russian Fleet to Toulon, and the visit of its officers to Paris was spontaneous, genuine and universal, for the grumblings of the anarchist Press need not be taken into account. The reason of this is not far to seek. The people of France, like all Celtic nations, are sensitive and morbidly hungry for sympathy and admiration. The German War and its results wounded their vanity to the quick, and though they have borne their humiliation with patience and dignity they do not the less resent it. Nor has their twenty years' isolation in the midst of Europe, aggravated as it has been by the exasperating squabbles in which they have been uninterruptedly involved with all their neighbours, proved a less fertile source of irritation. A couple of years ago I reported from Rome

[1] Reprinted with the permission of H. M. Stationery Office.

that on the occasion of the visit of Admiral Hoskins to Toulon in 1890 the French officers had bitterly complained of there being no port in the Mediterranean in which they were welcome.

Under the foregoing circumstances, it is no wonder that when the Emperor of Russia began to evince a friendly feelling towards the Republic, his advances were met with joyous alacrity. The feelings thus engendered in the breasts of an impulsive and excitable community, which from all time has been liable to gusts of passion, were easily worked up into a condition of frenzy by those who were interested in accentuating the intimacy of these new-born relations. Nor did the august social rank of the Emperor, and the Imperial splendour by which he is surrounded, play a small part in kindling the enthusiasm of the French democracy, who undoubtedly felt a peculiar satisfaction in possessing so "smart" a friend.

But, however obvious may be the forces which brought about the recent Franco-Russian demonstrations, it is a more difficult task to forecast either their immediate or their ulterior effect. One thing is certain—some effect they must have. An event which has attracted the attention of the civilized world and has appealed to the imagination and self-love of two powerful nations can hardly remain as inconsequential as a passing dream.

It may be argued that a good understanding between France and Russia need not necessarily prove injurious to British interests, nay, that it may tend rather to diminish than to increase the chances of a European conflict. Evidently France dare not commence hostilities except with the consent of Russia, and it is certain that Russia will never countenance such a step unless it suits her own interests to do so, while the chances of the same identical moment being propitious for two allied nations to make war are always less than when the

interests of only one have to be consulted. It may also be said that the personal character of the Emperor, his alleged love of peace, and the autocratic control which he exercises over the Russian administration, will both incline and enable him to damp the outbursts of French chauvinism, and prevent a mere accident a temporary collision between France and one of her neighbours, or a wave of popular passion propagated from Paris, from setting the world in flames. On the other hand, it is certain, especially since the Emperor's last telegram, that apart from graver issues the diplomacy of Europe is face to face with a new situation, that as far as we are concerned we shall not find the representatives of France and Russia allied against us in respect of all the current controversies of the day in which the interests of one or other of those two Powers are concerned; and that both are likely to prove more susceptible, more exacting and peremptory than formerly.

I have already stated my belief that there is a growing dislike of war amongst the French rural population; a dislike arising, on the one hand, from the desire for ease and comfort which has expanded with the increasing wealth and prosperity of the lower classes, and, on the other, from the way in which the conscription has brought home to every family in France, and especially to the women, the fearful consequences which war would entail on their husbands, and particularly on their sons, for whom they probably care more. It is even possible that a vague expectation that the Russian Alliance will render a German invasion less likely has contributed to the enthusiasm with which the former has been welcomed. But it must always be remembered that these sober tendencies are liable at any moment to be neutralized, or rather replaced, by a fit of military fervour, on the first sentimental appeal which may be made to their patriotism, or rather to their love of glory, by some powerful orator or by the phantom

of a popular hero such as Boulanger, while in the background and deep down in the hearts of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, sleeps a determination either to win back the conquered provinces, or to revive in some other shape the lost pre-eminence and prestige of their country. In the meantime, however, it is probable that the professions of the Government and of France's public men of a desire for peace are perfectly genuine, though from a less praiseworthy reason than that for which they would willingly be given credit. On the other hand, they doubt whether Russia will be ready to go for war for another two years or so, an opinion which is shared, I believe, by a capable diplomatist accredited to the Emperor; and they also know that their new friend will require fifty or sixty millions sterling of their money to complete his strategic railways. On the other, they suspect that they themselves are inferior to the Germans, both as regards the rifle with which their army is at present armed and in the rapidity of the fire of their artillery. In the meantime, everything in Europe they calculate, is working so powerfully in their favour as to make it their interest to stave off the crisis for the present. The financial situation of Italy is deteriorating every day; France's efforts to injure her commerce and to depress her credit have been crowned with a considerable measure of success; and the Pope has recently accentuated his friendship for France by placing in the hands of the Republic the nomination to the Bishopric of Tunis, which hitherto had been in the gift of the Propaganda. As a result, the French anticipate that the Italian people, becoming dispirited and disgusted with the present policy of their rulers, may be led to dethrone the dynasty of Savoy, and declare a Republic in alliance with their own. At the same time they expect that Russian intrigues in Bohemia, Servia, and elsewhere, by undermining the loyalty of Austria's Slavonic populations, may create equal trouble at

Prague and Vienna. Already they have noted with satisfaction that Servia has had the hardihood, through her principal Mayor, to send a message of congratulation to the French authorities on the success of the Russian fêtes, and they boast, whether rightly or not I cannot say, of similar marks of sympathy from the Bohemian Czechs. In this way they anticipate the Triple Alliance will fall to pieces of its own accord, and Germany will be left a prey to be devoured or at all events coerced by themselves and Russia at the appointed time.

But, though the immediate intentions of France may be eminently peaceful, I doubt whether the same thing can be said of Italy. In spite of his profession, I was always convinced that there was nothing Signor Crispi desired more than to bring on a European war, in view of the pickings which Italy might get in the general conflagration. There is no doubt that a little while ago there was a desperate inclination on the part of the Italians to run amuck at France at any hazard, in the expectations that neither their allies nor England would allow them to be destroyed. On the other hand, the hatred of the French towards the Italians far surpasses their hatred of the Germans or of ourselves. Notwithstanding, however, these uncomfortable relations, M. Carnot took the opportunity of a recent visit paid to him by General d'Oncieux, who represented the Italian Army at Marshal MacMahon's funeral, to address him in the most conciliatory and pacific language; while the attitude of the French Government in reference to the recent murders of Italian workmen has been sufficiently correct.

The foregoing slight summary of the aspect of affairs in France at this moment would not be complete unless a few words were added in reference to the light in which we ourselves are regarded. I am afraid that I can only describe the sentiments of French people of all classes towards us as that

of unmitigated and bitter dislike. In part, this is merely a continuation of the historical stream of tendency which has placed enmity between England and France from the days of Cressy down to those of Waterloo. Evidence of this may be gathered from the recrudescence of the admiration and worship of Joan of Arc, and from other similar indications; but its real origin in the minds of the responsible political leaders is to be referred to our attitude during the Franco-German War. Frenchmen, with their vehement impulsive natures, can never understand how anyone can remain impartial when they have a quarrel on hand with their neighbours. In their eyes a neutral is almost an enemy. When, therefore, we initiated the league of peace, and promoted the neutralization of Belgium, France regarded us as really siding with her opponents. This very real and active cause of resentment has been fomented and exacerbated by the way in which our expanding commercial interests and our colonizing enterprises anticipate and impede the corresponding efforts of their Government and of their merchants. They have a feeling that we are always getting the better of them all over the world, and crossing their path at the very point when it is about to open on some extraordinary advantage. Though the outward signs of their anger on this account are only visible on special occasions, and in reference to public or semi-public questions, such as Egypt, Newfoundland, Siam, etc., every mercantile house, every company that is interested in France's colonial fortunes, and each of their numerous shareholders, becomes a centre from which exaggerated complaints and false accusations against us are propagated in all directions. The causes of hatred are envenomed and intensified by the Press of Paris. The press of Paris is the worst Press in Europe. The people who contribute to it are very clever, and know exactly how to excite the rancour or inflame the prejudices of their readers. They have a con-

genital and instinctive disregard of truth, and they lie—not as an Englishman lies when he does lie, of malice prepense—but because they do not feel that a lie matters much one way or the other. They are for the most part absolutely ignorant of the history, the language, the habits, the politics, the modes of thought, and the geography of other countries, and, with a certain number of honourable exceptions, gain is their only motive, unless when it is spite or revenge. Moreover, writers of this class, like angry women, find a certain excitement and relief in reviling people they dislike, even at the expense of the obvious interests of their country, and when they can have no practical end in view. On the other hand, the French newspaper-reading public requires highly seasoned and abusive articles to stimulate their attention and to feed their prejudices. Denunciations of England are therefore pretty sure to command a large and lucrative circulation. As a consequence, not a day passes that we are not taken to task for our sordid politics, our overbearing manners, our selfishness, our perfidy, and our other inveterate bad qualities. It was under these circumstances that the accusations brought against the Embassy both in regard to the distribution of bribes to Members of Parliament, and in reference to the forged correspondence with the Foreign Office, received such ready credence. Nor, when once a myth of the kind is started, can it ever be eradicated. From a lie it grows into a tradition and eventually passes into history.

It is said indeed that too much importance should not be given to the utterances of the Paris Press, and that its teachings do not permeate beyond Paris. In the first place this is not true, for the *Petit Journal*, one of the most unscrupulous of the Paris newspapers, and peculiarly hostile to England, has an enormous circulation in the Departments. But, in any event, the Paris Press acts very powerfully not only upon the Members of both the Chambers but also upon the public

opinion of the capital; and experience has over and over again exemplified the disproportionate ascendancy exercised by Paris over the rest of France.

In view, therefore, of the strong feelings of hostility towards England which prevail in this country; of its enormous armaments; of the innumerable occasions when we shall be compelled in the future to run counter to some of France's most cherished wishes and ambitions, I should not be fulfilling one of the first duties incumbent upon me as Her Majesty's Ambassador accredited to the Republic, did I not call the serious attention of your Lordship to the desirability of being prepared to meet, and successfully cope with, all eventualities. I understood from Captain May, our late Naval Attaché, that both as regards the engines of her ships and her torpedo fleet, France may be considered superior to ourselves. Her navy is being continually reinforced. Colonel Talbot has more than once borne testimony to the growing improvement in her formidable army. Though, therefore, it seems to be the general opinion that France's aim is still fixed upon Alsace and Lorraine, it is possible that, with the new generation, her eagerness for the recovery of these provinces may decay, in proportion as their populations become reconciled to the domination of Germany; and the ambition of France to re-establish her pre-eminence amongst the nations of Europe may be indulged in at our expense. Only a few weeks before Austria was destroyed at Austerlitz, Napoleon was apparently intent on the conquest of England. What may happen once may happen again, and it is not therefore impossible that a *volte-face* from East to West, analogous to that of Napoleon from West to East, may some day take place in this country, should some unexpected, and I must admit improbable, contingency tempt the French to try the experiment. Were Prince Bismarck in power, he would be quite capable, I imagine, of trying to bring about

a diversion of the sort. At all events I believe that, if war were inevitable, a war with England would be as popular as, and would be considered less dangerous than a single-handed encounter with Germany. That such an attempt on the part of France would end in disaster is very likely; but the danger lies not in her accomplishing her aim, but in her fancying herself strong enough to embark upon the adventure. When living at Walmer, I have often watched the cliffs of France gleaming in the evening sun, during a succession of calm days when the smallest open boat could have safely rowed across the Channel; and when I reflected that beyond them was encamped an active army of five hundred thousand men, and a force of three millions of trained soldiers in reserve, I have felt how foolish it would be if, reposing on our historical laurels, we should leave out of account the change which has been recently introduced into all the elements of warfare both by sea and land. These convictions have been only intensified by everything I have since observed in the character, in the animus, and in the warlike preparations of the French people; nor is the establishment of this close intimacy between France and Russia calculated to modify them.

(Signed) DUFFERIN AND AVA.

### LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. M. GRIERSON TO SIR F. LASCELLES.

F.O. Germany (Prussia), 1437.
(No. 1898) Confidential.

Berlin, *January* 19, 1898.

SIR,—I have the honour to report to your Excellency that on the 15th instant I was invited to join a shooting party by His Majesty the Emperor. . . .

He then began one of the tirades, with which he has fre-

quently favoured me, against British policy. He said that for eight years he had striven to be friendly with Great Britain, to gain her alliance, and to work hand in hand with her, but had failed. We should never have such a chance again, for never again would a grandson of the Queen of Great Britain be on the German Throne. He had his own subjects to look after, and could not be expected to be the Viceroy and guardian of British interests on the Continent of Europe and elsewhere. So, finding that Great Britain refused to ally herself with him, he had to go on ahead alone and further German interests. I said nothing to all this, until, turning round to me, he said: "Tell me, have you any policy? What is your idea of policy?" Thus directly questioned, I replied that I was no politician, but the idea I had was that, if an alliance were possible, it would have to be either with the Triple or Dual Alliance. To join either would embroil us with the other. We did not desire to embroil ourselves with anybody, we were strong enough to hold our own against either group, and it was unlikely that both would combine against us. To this he replied: "You are mistaken, they can combine, and they shall combine." (This latter with great emphasis) "Socialism and other causes will force the monarchs of the Continent to combine for mutual assistance, and the yellow races of the East are our greatest danger." He then mentioned the allegorical picture he had drawn of Europe combining to resist the yellow race, and said that it would yet be realized.

He then asked if I had seen the picture of himself in *Punch* as Emperor of China, and said that the Empress had seen it first and was furious about it, but that he did not mind and thought it rather a good joke. "But," he said, "your people do not realize how monarchs are looked upon on the Continent, and while those personal attacks are made upon me you cannot expect the German Press to remain quiet. . . ."

## Sir F. Lascelles to Mr. Balfour.

F.O. Germany (Africa), 1449.
(No. 102) Africa. Secret.

Homburg, D., *August* 23, 1898.
R., *August* 29, 1898.

Sir,—I had a long conversation with His Majesty, the principal points of which I embodied in my secret telegram of yesterday's date, and of which I will now attempt to give a detailed report. . . .

His Majesty went on to say that Colonial expansion had become a necessity for Germany, and that she certainly would obtain the Colonies she required. He would infinitely prefer to obtain them by a friendly understanding with England, but if he found it impossible to do so he would be compelled to seek assistance elsewhere, to put himself under obligations to other Powers, which would certainly not be agreeable to him. He still hoped that an arrangement with England might be possible, but, although he was not in possession of the latest details with regard to the negotiations about the Portuguese loan, he feared that there was a prospect of their breaking down, and if this should unfortunately be the case, he would be obliged to reconsider his policy. He had certainly spared no efforts to bring about a good understanding with England, but what had been the result? All his proposals had been rejected in a manner which he would most certainly have strongly resented if any other Power than England had treated him with such scant consideration, and, in his position as German Emperor, it would be impossible for him to continue to submit much longer to such treatment even from England. It was not enough that he should be told that there was a desire for a good

understanding or even an alliance. He must have some documents to go upon, and so far the action of Her Majesty's Government was not in accordance with the alleged desire for a good understanding. He said that it would really seem that Her Majesty's Government were unable to grasp the situation, and he criticized with some acerbity the action of Her Majesty's Government in China. Even now they did not seem to have realized that Russia had obtained a paramount position at Peking and that the policy of the open door had failed. It was not often that he found himself in agreement with Sir William Harcourt, but that statesman was right when he stated in the recent debate in the House of Commons that the policy of the open door was entirely different from that of "spheres of influence," and that Her Majesty's Government were following a wrong path in attempting to combine the two. In the same way Her Majesty's Government did not seem to perceive that Germany must and would obtain Colonial expansion, and that it was to the interest of England to assist her to do so, instead of alienating her by opposing her attempts. His Majesty then referred to the tone of the English Press, and, on my observing that for some months past it had entirely ceased its attack upon His Majesty, and, indeed, in many cases had assumed a friendly attitude towards Germany, he replied that, although this was so, he had received information from a good source that the violent hostility of the American Press was in a great measure due to English suggestion. His Majesty added that the conduct of the President and Government of the United States had been perfectly correct in spite of the violence of the Press.

I replied that I had no knowledge of this, but I could only repeat my conviction that a sincere desire for a good understanding existed in England, which in some influential quarters went so far as a wish for an alliance which should be

strictly defensive and should only take effect if either Party were attacked by two Powers at the same time. His Majesty seemed impressed by this idea, and said it was the first he had heard of it. I then added that at the risk of being indiscreet I could tell His Majesty that in the various conversations which I had had with influential persons in England I had repeated what His Majesty had said previously to me as to his difficulty in entering into negotiations for such a purpose. If they were to fail England would be left in much the same position as before, whereas His Majesty would incur the hostility of his neighbours and render his country liable to invasion on two sides simultaneously, a contingency in which, His Majesty had pointed out, England would be powerless of rendering him any assistance. This consideration had produced a certain effect, but the answer seemed to be that if such an alliance would be brought about, France and Russia combined would not venture to attack so powerful a combination. . . .

SIR F. LASCELLES TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY.

F.O. Germany (Prussia), 1439.
(No. 338.) Very Confidential.

Berlin, D., *December* 21, 1898.
R., *December* 26, 1898.

MY LORD,—His Majesty expressed his deep regret at having been obliged, owing to want of time, to give up his intended visit to Egypt, and also that, in consequence of the advanced season and bad weather, he had been unable to visit Gibraltar and return by sea. He had heard that the Queen had intended, if he had touched at an English port, to have invited him to Windsor, and if he had had the slightest inkling of Her Majesty's gracious intention, he would certainly have carried out his original plan.

I ventured to suggest that the critical state of affairs in Europe at the time may perhaps have caused His Majesty to hasten his return.

The Emperor admitted that this was so, and that at the time it looked as if war were imminent between England and France in consequence of the Fashoda question. The French, it was true, had yielded upon that question, but His Majesty considered that the danger was by no means past, and that it was probable that war would break out in the spring. From a military point of view, the moment was well chosen. France was by no means the equal of England at sea, and she would receive no assistance from any other Power. In fact, if the war took place it would be conducted at sea, and the other Powers, even if they desired to assist France, would be unable to do so effectively. The English Fleet was immensely superior to all others, and the German and Russian Fleet were mere pigmies in comparison. England, would, therefore, have an excellent opportunity of settling accounts with France without any fear of the interference of other Powers, and it was doubtful whether so favourable a combination for England would ever again recur.

I told His Majesty that I was aware that a fear was still entertained in some quarters in England that war might break out in the spring, but that I failed to understand the arguments on which this idea was based. Her Majesty's Government had certainly no desire to force a war upon France, and if the latter had shrunk from war now on account of her inferiority to England at sea, I did not see how she could hope to become sufficiently strong to go to war in the spring.

His Majesty was not convinced by my observations, and seemed to be under the impression, which I attempted, though I am afraid in vain, to combat, that England intended to make war, the result of which would inevitably

be in her favour, and would enable her to finally settle many questions between the two nations.

The Emperor went on to say that it seemed that all the Latin nations were in a state of decay. Spain had shown in the recent war with the United States how utterly weak and incapable she had become. Portugal was very much in the same state, and Italy but very little better. Now it appeared that France herself was also in a state of decay. England, therefore, with her immense naval superiority, would have no difficulty in destroying the French Fleet and taking all her Colonies. There could be no question of an invasion of either country. The English Army was too small to attempt to land in France, and the French Army, in consequence of the inferiority of their fleet, would not be able to reach England. . . .

His Majesty continued, that if war should break out, which he considered almost certain, he would maintain a strict neutrality as long as the struggle was confined to England and France, but that if any other Power came to the assistance of the latter, he would act in accordance with the agreement he made with me at Friedrichshof in August. . . .

### Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Salisbury.

F.O. Germany (Prussia), 1470.
(No. 152.) Confidential.

Berlin, D., *May* 26, 1899.
R., *May* 29, 1899.

My Lord,—On the evening of the 24th instant, the Emperor gave the usual banquet in honour of the Queen's Birthday, to which all the members of Her Majesty's Embassy now in Berlin had the honour of being invited. . . .

At dinner, I had the honour of being seated beside His Majesty, who, as always, was amiable and polite to me personally, but took no pains to conceal his irritation towards England on account of Samoa. He began by observing that the uniform of an English admiral, which he had donned for the occasion, might perhaps remind me of a brave English sailor named Sturdee, to which I replied at once that from the reports which I had seen, I gathered that Captain Sturdee was an energetic officer, and that I hoped that as the commission must almost have arrived in Samoa by this time, a satisfactory solution of the question might shortly be expected.

The Emperor replied that things ought never to have been allowed to come to that point, and evidently attributed the whole blame to the action of the English officials. I therefore ventured to observe that it was natural that His Majesty should form his opinion from the reports of his Consul-General but it was equally natural that Her Majesty's Government should be guided by the reports of their Consul on the spot, and the conflict of evidence was so strong that it would be necessary to await the result of the enquiry which the Commission would have to make, before forming a definitive judgment.

The Emperor replied with some warmth that the facts were to speak for themselves. The Germans had taken no part in the bombardment which the English and American ships had kept up for three weeks, to the damage of German property. I could have no idea of the irritation which this had caused in Germany, more especially in the south, from whence he had just returned, and where the indignation was felt equally by the people and the Princes. It was, however, all of a piece with the policy which Her Majesty's Government seemed to have adopted, viz., to treat Germany as a

nonentity. He knew that England was powerful and Germany weak at sea, and therefore the former could act with impunity, but the time would come when even England would have to consider the German Fleet as an important factor, and he only hoped that it would not then be too late, and that Germany would not by that time have formed other combinations which would certainly not be agreeable to England, but which she would have brought upon herself by the constant disregard and contempt with which she treated German interests. The feeling in Germany against England was so bitter that there could be no question of his visiting Cowes this year, and all this was the more disappointing as the relations between the two countries at the beginning of the year had become so good. Last year we had succeeded in concluding an agreement with regard to Africa which he would faithfully observe. Then came Mr. Rhodes' visit to Berlin which had created an excellent impression, and now all the good that had been done was completely destroyed by our conduct in Samoa. He had constantly laboured to bring about a good understanding with England, but whenever he seemed to be on the point of succeeding, some incident had occurred to frustrate his desires. He compared himself to Sisyphus, and said that it was most discouraging, when he really thought he had got the stone to the top of the hill, to see it roll down to the bottom.

During the course of the evening His Majesty honoured me with further conversation, in which he alluded to the large sums of money which had been sent from England to bribe the American Press to attack Germany. I replied that I had no knowledge of this, but if it were the case, I did not suppose that His Majesty really considered that Her Majesty's Government were responsible. The Emperor observed that Her Majesty's Government must have known of it and had

taken no steps to counteract this evil influence which, however, had not prevailed, as the relations between Germany and the United States had now been put on a satisfactory footing. All this was known in Germany and increased the ill-feeling towards England, and a long time would elapse, and many things would have to be changed, before he could hope to be again cheered on leaving the English Embassy, a fact which I might remember had given him so much pleasure.

His Majesty referred in terms of praise to Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who had been acting strenuously on his behalf in England. He also expressed regret that more leading Englishmen did not visit Berlin. They would then perhaps find that Germany was not quite the despicable country they had been taught to believe, and he was looking forward to the pleasure of seeing many of my fellow-countrymen during the yacht-racing week at Kiel.

In the course of the conversation I ventured to ask His Majesty whether I was to consider that he included Her Majesty's Ambassador in the general condemnation which he had passed on England, to which he replied by quoting a verse from Schiller: *Ich weiss den Mann von seinem Amt zu scheiden.*

On taking leave of His Majesty I asked if he had any orders for England, as I hoped to be there before long. His Majesty assumed his jocose manner and said: "Yes. Tell your people to behave themselves properly," and then related an anecdote of Dean Liddell, who, on reproving an offending undergraduate, concluded his admonition with the words: "Not only have you imperilled your immortal soul, but you have also incurred my serious displeasure."

The impression which the Emperor's language left upon my mind is that His Majesty wished to speak more in sorrow than in anger, but somehow allowed the latter sentiment to

become predominant, and that His Majesty's apologue, though spoken in jest, is not far from a correct description of his present frame of mind, and should not be considered entirely as a joke.

(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

# APPENDIX B

## BISMARCK: *THOUGHTS AND RECOLLECTIONS*

### (*Vol. III. Pages* 121–27, 128–30, 132)

It would appear from the Kaiser's natural disposition that he has been endowed by his forefathers with a goodly variety of their characteristics. From our first King he has the love of pomp, the delight in ceremonial Court functions made more picturesque by brilliant uniforms, combined with a keen susceptibility to adroitly tendered praise. The absolutism of the period of Frederick I has been materially modified in its practical manifestations; but I believe that, had existing laws permitted it, I should not have escaped the fate of Count Eberhard Danckelmann as an end to my political career. In view of the short span of life on which I may count at my age, I should not have attempted to evade such a dramatic end to my public life, and could have borne this further irony of fate, cheerfully resigned to the Will of God. Even in the most serious moments of my life I have been able to retain my sense of humour.

There are certain hereditary resemblances between the Kaiser and Frederick William I, chiefly where external appearance is concerned, as in their preference for "tall fellows." If the aides-de-camp of the Kaiser were measured, it would be found that they are nearly all exceptionally tall, about 6ft. or more. While the Court was in residence at the Marble Palace, an unknown tall officer once presented himself and demanded access to Mis Majesty, stating on being questioned that he had been appointed aide-de-camp. This statement was only credited after it had been confirmed by His Majesty. The new aide-de-camp towered above his comrades whom he had only with difficulty convinced of his right to put in an appearance at the Palace.

Still more marked is the Kaiser's predisposition, inherited from Frederick William I and Frederick II, to conduct affairs of state in an autocratic manner, and his belief in the justice of *hoc volo, sic jubeo.* But, in accordance with the tendencies of their days, his progenitors exercised their autocracy without regard to whether their method of government earned them approval or not. It is scarcely possible to ascertain whether the contemporaries of Frederick William I recognized, as did posterity, that in his high-handed actions he did not consider the judgment of others, as did his father. Today history has given its verdict that *salus publica* and not personal concern was *suprema lex* to him.

Frederick the Great did not leave any issue, but his place in history is bound to act on each of his successors as a challenge to emulate him. He possessed two gifts which mutually promoted each other, that of the military leader and that of a homely, petty-bourgeois understanding of the interests of his subjects. Without the former he could not have been able to practise the latter so constantly, and without the latter his military successes would not have gained for him the praise of posterity to the same extent that they did, although in general it may be said of the European nations, that those Kings are counted the most democratic and popular who have gained the most sanguinary laurels for their country—and sometimes wantonly lost them again. Charles XII obstinately led his Swedes to national ruin, but in spite of this his picture is more frequently found in Swedish peasant huts as the symbol of Swedish glory than is that of Gustavus Adolphus. Civilizing and peaceful efforts to further national prosperity do not as a rule call forth enthusiasm and endear a ruler to the Christian nations of Europe to the same extent as the readiness to expend the blood and fortune of his subjects in gaining victories on the battlefield. Louis XIV and Napoleon, whose wars ruined the nation and concluded with

but a small degree of success, have remained the pride of Frenchmen, and compared with them other monarchs and governments recede into the back-ground in spite of their civic merits. When I picture to myself the history of the European nations, I fail to find any example tending to show that honest and devoted attention to their peaceful prosperity has ever proved more attractive to the peoples than warlike glory, victorious battles, and conquests of resisting territories.

Changing times and his intercourse with foreign intellectuals had aroused in Frederick II in contradistinction to his father, a need of approbation which betrayed itself in small things at an early stage. In his correspondence with Count Seckendorff he tried to impress this old sinner by telling him of his sexual excesses and the diseases caused thereby, and his sudden march to Silesia soon after his accession to the throne is ascribed by himself to the desire for fame. From the field he sent off poems with the signature "*pas trop mal pour la veille d'une grande bataille.*" However, the love of approbation in a monarch is a very powerful and sometimes also useful incentive to action; if it is absent, he is more liable than others to succumb to a sensuous inactivity; neither is *un petit roi d'Yvetôt, se levant tard, se couchant tôt dormant fort bien sans gloire,* likely to make his country happy.

Would the world have seen "Great" Frederick, would it have witnessed the heroic self-denial of William I, if both had lacked the desire for approbation? Vanity in itself is a mortgage which has to be deducted from the capacities of the man who is burdened with it in order to arrive at the clear profit which remains as the available yield of his endowment. In Frederick II intellect and courage predominated to such a degree that they could not be despoiled of their value by any act of self-glorification or exaggerated form of self-confidence. . . . William I was extremely conscious of his position as a Prussian Officer and King of Prussia, but his

nobility and the reliability and integrity of his character were sufficiently great to support the burden, the more so as his need of approbation was free from any tendency to overrate himself; on the contrary, his dignified modesty was equalled by his courage and sense of duty. The severity of character and conduct of our former Kings was ameliorated by their sincere and honest benevolence towards their subjects and servants, and their loyalty to both.

Frederick the Great's habit of meddling in the affairs of the Departments of his Ministers and officials, and in the domestic conditions of his subjects, occasionally appeals to His Majesty as an example. He had a propensity for marginal comments of a dictatorial and critical nature which was so pronounced, that during my period of office great inconvenience was caused in the Departments, as the content and expression of the comments were so strong that the documents concerned had to be carefully hidden away. Representations made by me to His Majesty concerning this matter were not graciously received, but nevertheless they had one good result—these notes were no longer written in the margin of indispensable documents but were pasted on to them. The less complicated constitution and the smaller size of Prussia made it easier for Frederick the Great to survey the situation of the whole country, both internally and externally, and consequently, for a monarch of his experience of government, his clear-sightedness, and his thorough workmanlike methods, the practice of writing short marginal notes caused fewer difficulties in the Government service than they would under present conditions. The patience with which he acquainted himself with expert and legal questions and listened to the opinions of competent and efficient men of affairs, gave to his marginalia the authority of the professional man.

In two directions William II had shared in the legacy of Frederick William II: He has a strong sexual development

and a certain susceptibility to mystical influences. It is scarcely possible to prove absolutely by what means the Kaiser ascertains the Will of God, to whose service he dedicates his activities. The suggestions in the fantastic piece King and Minister: A Midnight Conversation, from a "Book of Vows," and the miniatures of the three great ancestors do not help to illuminate the subject.

I cannot discover any apparent resemblance between Frederick William III and William II. The former was a man of taciturn habit, timid, and opposed to publicity and popularity hunting. I remember how, at a review at Stargard at the beginning of the eighteen-thirties, the ovations of his Pomeranian subjects caused him to lose his temper at the moment when *"Heil Dir im Siegeskranz,"* mingled with shouts of "Hurrah," was sung at a short distance from him; his expressions of annoyance were so loud and emphatic that the singers immediately stopped. William I had his share of this paternal legacy of self-conscious modesty, and was disagreeably affected when the ovations offered to him exceeded the limits of good taste. Crude flatteries annoyed him, and his pleasure at any expression of sympathetic loyalty froze at once if he suspected the slightest exaggeration or evidence of place-hunting.

The Kaiser shares with Frederick William IV the gift of eloquence, and the urge to employ it more often than is advisable. He is never at a loss for words but, his great-uncle was more careful in his choice of them, and perhaps also more industrious and scientific. In the case of the great-nephew the stenographer is not always "reliable," but Frederick William IV's speeches, on the other hand, are almost above criticism. They constitute an eloquent and often poetical expression of thought, which was capable of stirring up the people, if the corresponding action had but followed. I well remember the enthusiasm which the coronation address and

the utterances of the King on other public occasions ("*Alaaf Koln*") aroused, and if these had been followed in the same spirited manner by energetic decisions they might already at that time have produced a tremendous effect, all the more as people were not yet blunted to political emotions. In the years 1841 and 1842 more could be achieved with fewer means than in 1849. This can now be impartially judged, as what then seemed desirable has been attained, and in a national sense the need of 1840 no longer exists, but rather the reverse. *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien* is one of the most pertinent proverbs against which Germans are, in theory, more inclined to sin than are the people of any other nation. William II resembles Frederick William IV inasmuch as the foundation of their political beliefs is rooted in the conception that the King, and he alone, is more closely acquainted with the Will of God than are other people, that he should govern in accordance with it, and that he therefore claims trust and obedience from his subjects without discussing his aims with them or even making his aims known. Frederick William IV had no doubt that before God he occupied this favoured position—his honest belief coincided with the notion of the High Priest of the Jews, who alone steps behind the curtain.

In certain respects one looks in vain for analogies between William II and his three ascendants. Certain fundamental qualities in the characters of Frederick William II, William I, and Frederick II, are not conspicuous in the young gentleman. A certain diffidence with regard to their own ability has yielded in the fourth generation to positive self-confidence such as we have not encountered on the throne since Frederick the Great, but this is confined to the present ruler. . . .

When I try to picture the Kaiser after the termination of my official relations with him, I find the characteristics of

his forefathers embodied in him in a way, which would have strong claims to my affection if they were animated by the principle of mutuality between monarch and subject, between master and man. The German feudal law gives the vassal few claims beyond the right of possession of the fief, but he may still claim reciprocity of loyalty between him and his feudal lord; and a violation of this by either side is called felony. William I, his son, and his ancestors possessed this special sense in a high degree, and it forms the essential basis for the attachment of the Prussian people to their rulers, which is psychologically comprehensible because unrequited love does not give a lasting impetus to the human soul. With William II, I have never been able to free myself from the impression of unrequited love. The feeling which is the firmest basis for the constitution of the Prussian Army, the feeling that neither officer nor soldier will leave the other in the lurch, a principle which William I practised to extremes in his dealings with his servants, is at present not recognizable to any extent in the young gentleman's conceptions. The claim to unconditional devotion, to confidence and unassailable loyalty, has taken an increased hold of him, but an inclination to grant confidence and security in return for these has hitherto not been discernible. The light-heartedness with which he dismisses, without explaining his motives, servants of proved worth, even those whom he had treated up to that time as personal friends, does not assist but rather weakens the spirit of confidence which has been alive in the servants of the Kings of Prussia for generations.

With the passing of the Hohenzollern spirit and the adoption of Coburg-English conceptions, we have lost an imponderable which will be difficult to replace. William I protected and defended his servants, even when they were unfortunate or unskilful, to a degree which scarcely paid, and in consequence he had servants who were attached to

him beyond the measure of what was profitable for them. His habitual warm-hearted benevolence became immutable when his gratitude for services rendered was also involved. It was foreign to his nature to regard, without concern for the feelings of others, his own will as the sole arbiter. His manner towards his subjects always remained that of a great and kindly gentleman, which softened any discord that might have occurred in the course of business. Slander and defamation which reached his ears failed in face of his fine uprightness; and place-hunters, whose sole merit consisted in the audacity of their flatteries, had no chance of success with William I. He was inaccessible to back-stairs influences and tale-bearing against his servants, even when this proceeded from highly placed persons who were near to him; and if he did seriously consider what had been communicated to him, he did it in open discussion with the person concerned, behind whose back the charge had originally been made. If he differed from me, he expressed himself openly, discussed the matter with me, and if I failed in gaining him over to my point of view I would give in if possible, and where this was impossible I postponed the matter or definitely let it drop. My independence in the conduct of policy has been overrated, honestly so by my friends and tendentiously by my enemies, because I used to relinquish wishes, to which the King consistently and from his own conviction objected, without pressing them to a conflict between us. I accepted on account what was attainable and only went on strike in those cases where my personal honour was involved, as in that of the "Reichsglocken" case through the Empress, and in the Usedom case through masonic influences. I have neither been a courtier nor a free-mason.

The Kaiser tried to dispense with the assistance of his friends by making concessions to his enemies. His grandfather likewise attempted, at the commencement of his reign,

to gain the general approval of his subjects without losing their obedience and thus endangering the safety of the realm, but after four years of experience he recognized the error of his advisers and his consort, who assumed that the opponents of the monarchy by liberal concessions might be transformed into friends and supporters. In 1862 he was more inclined to abdicate than cede to parliamentary liberalism, and with the support of the loyal elements who, although passive, proved themselves to be stronger in the end, he gave battle. . . .

Towards foreign countries also, whether friendly, hostile, or doubtful, he showed himself more amiable than could be reconciled with the idea that we considered ourselves safe in the realization of our own power. As a matter of fact, no one, either at the Foreign Office or at Court, was sufficiently familiar with international psychology to gauge accurately the effect of such methods. Neither the Emperor, nor Caprivi, nor Marschall was fitted for this by previous experience, and the political sense of honour of the advisers to the Crown was satisfied by the signature of the Kaiser, regardless of the consequences for the Reich.

THE END